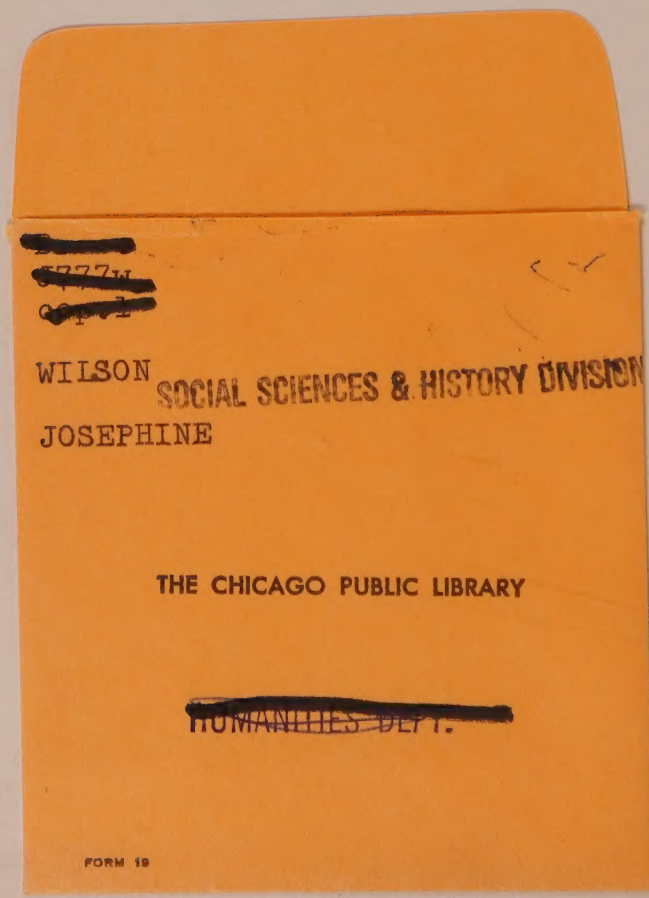
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# JOSEPHINE

## THE PORTRAIT OF A WOMAN

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*From the sketch by* DAVID.

# JOSEPHINE

## THE PORTRAIT OF A WOMAN

*by*

R. McNAIR WILSON

*Author of "The Beloved Physician: A Life of Sir James Mackenzie," "Napoleon, the Man," etc.*

NEW YORK
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TO
MY WIFE

# PREFACE

"Any stick is good enough to beat a dog." During more than a century Josephine has been made use of throughout the world to discredit the character of Napoleon. For the purposes of this policy she has been represented as the loving wife of a man to whose ambition she was ruthlessly sacrificed.

A reaction to such a view was inevitable, sooner or later, and came towards the end of the last century. Unhappily, this reaction borrowed violence from the opinions which it opposed and presented, in consequence, a monstrous figure, coarse, stupid and depraved. Even a casual acquaintance with the facts of Josephine's life discredits that portrait. A deeper study of her life reveals her as a woman of an order of intelligence far above the ordinary.

The earlier writers about Josephine were concerned chiefly to please King Louis XVIII. and his brother, the Comte d'Artois, or to satisfy the consciences of English folk. They extolled, therefore, her gentleness and charm of manner, which, they hinted artfully, derived from her association with the old monarchy and from her marriage to Alexander de Beauharnais. Napoleon, it was suggested, had climbed to power by the help of his aristocratic wife, whom he had grossly ill-used, and from whom, when she had ceased to be of use to him, he had callously separated himself. This view animates the works of that impudent sorceress Mademoiselle Lenormand and of Madame Ducrest. Mademoiselle Lenormand was the fashionable fortune-teller of the Empire

and numbered Josephine among her patrons; but she possessed no real knowledge, and her bulky volumes are no more than a piece of barefaced effrontery. The case of Madame Ducrest is different. As a young girl she shared the Empress's exile at Navarre and Malmaison and came daily into contact with her. As M. Masson justly observed, there are diamonds among the clay of her tittle-tattle. All the letters, for example, from Napoleon to Josephine which she quotes—there are five of them—are spurious and must be rigidly rejected, and the same is true of many of the anecdotes which she presents with so great an assurance. It is interesting to observe that the story, widely believed, that Josephine, during the early days of her acquaintance with Napoleon, foresaw dimly the heights to which he might rise has no better foundation than the pen of this woman.

The publication of the *Memoirs of Barras* presented Josephine in a wholly different light, but this fellow is so shameless that his disclosures, even granting that he alone is responsible for them, must be received with caution. The Josephine he reveals was a woman ready, in his unlovely phrase, to drink gold out of the skull of her lover, greedy and of an appetite so uncontrolled that even the menservants of her lovers engaged her desires. It is necessary to know what Barras wrote, because no doubt can remain that Josephine was, for a short time, his mistress. But a knowledge of Barras himself is not less important to anybody in search of truth.

As usual, solid ground must be sought in contemporary letters. Of these there are, unhappily, few. We possess, however, the letters of Josephine's father about her marriage to Alexander de Beauharnais, the letters of Josephine to her mother, and the letters of Napoleon to Josephine. We do not possess the great bulk of the letters of Josephine to Napoleon,

though the contents of many of them can be inferred if a careful use is made of contemporary memoirs. The existing letters are of such a nature that a reasonably clear view of Josephine's character is possible, and it has seemed necessary, therefore, to transcribe many of them. I have, by kind permission of Messrs. Dent, made use, in most cases, of the admirable translations of H. J. Hall (*Napoleon's Letters to Josephine,* edited by H. J. Hall. Dent, 1901). Upon these letters and upon the researches of M. Masson, I have chiefly based the narrative which follows.

Mention must be made of the recently published *Memoirs of Queen Hortense* (Thornton Butterworth. 2 vols., 1928). These memoirs bear evidence of having been prepared with an eye on the future. Queen Hortense hoped to see her son Louis Napoleon (Napoleon III.) mount the Imperial Throne of France, and was concerned therefore to present both her mother and stepfather in a favourable light. Her memory is defective, and she seems to have been unaware of some important facts—notably, that Josephine was the eldest and not the youngest member of her family. With a filial devotion, wholly admirable, she omits mention of faults and leaves untold the story of her mother's ordeal at the time of Napoleon's return from Egypt. Her own share in the events preceding the Battle of Wagram is not disclosed. Her position was, admittedly, difficult, for she had run with the Bonaparte hare and hunted with the Bourbon hounds. She had suffered, too, in her marriage with Louis Bonaparte, though her version of that calamitous union cannot be accepted unreservedly.

There is no doubt that the tradition of Josephine as Napoleon's angel lingers among the English-speaking peoples. The "question of the vicar's wife," as it has been called, "Was he a good man?" is still asked about

Napoleon. It is still answered by pointing to his divorce and to the distress which Josephine is known to have suffered by reason of his infidelities. This assurance goes far to erase the uneasy impression that England's treatment of her great enemy was wanting in certain elements of chivalry. It may be that a closer study of this woman's character will do something to soften the condemnation passed on her husband. It cannot, however, change the belief that Napoleon loved Josephine; between these two, during one of the great moments of history, a sentiment existed at once mysterious and vital.

It remains to add that for purposes of greater clearness I have adopted the Italian forms of the names of the Buonaparte princes and princesses. By this means I have hoped to establish a contrast between Napoleone (or Nabulione) Buonaparte the Corsican and Napoleon Bonaparte.

R. M. WILSON.

London,
*October* 6, 1929.

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# BOOK I

# ALEXANDER

## CHAPTER I

## THE UGLY DUCKLING

To be born the eldest and the least good looking of a family of three daughters is not, perhaps, a lot which any woman would choose for herself. Parents, and especially mothers, are apt to expect much of an eldest daughter who is plain looking; suitors, on the contrary, can be counted on to prefer her prettier sisters.

Marie Joseph Rose Tascher La Pagerie found herself, before she was five years of age, in this unenviable position. Already, at that time, her father and mother were accustomed to speak of her younger sister, Desirée, as the beauty of the family, though the child was only three and a half years of age, and to predict, confidently, that Marie, their youngest, who was two, would be only a little less pretty. They left their eldest daughter in no doubt that her birth had been a severe disappointment. Had they not given her a boy's name?

The fact that he had no son to inherit his own and his wife's large estates and slaves was indeed a source of great uneasiness to Joseph Tascher La Pagerie. The times were troubled. Martinique, where his sugar plantations were situated, was coveted, as one of the richest of the West Indian Islands, by the British, and had actually been in their possession. The British had relinquished the island only a day or two before Marie Joseph Rose's birth on June 23, 1763,* and it was certain that, if war broke out again between Great Britain and France, the island would be retaken. How could women

* See note 1.

cope with the disturbances which must attend such a calamity? The good man fell into a gloomy state of mind, which the heavy financial losses he suffered in a great hurricane that demolished his dwelling-house and his plantations confirmed. He refused to build another house, and, in a kind of despair, transferred his family to the upper story of his sugar refinery, which from that time became their permanent home.

His lack of an heir embittered the planter against his wife as well as against Providence. But that woman, who had brought him a rich dowry in the shape of the Sannois plantations, seems to have cared very little what his feelings towards her might be. She was masterful where he was weak, cheerful where he was dejected, and she showed herself well able to conduct the business of the estates. Her husband, in the manner of weak men who cherish a grievance, began, after a time, to draw away from her towards his own people; he was guilty also of the mischievous error of playing off his eldest daughter against her mother. Relations very soon became strained between "Josephine," as Marie Joseph Rose was called, and Madame Tascher La Pagerie. When the girl was ten years of age she was packed off to stay with her paternal grandmother in the neighbouring town of Fort Royal, where there was a convent school.

Josephine welcomed this change, for, though she enjoyed the adoration which her father's slaves bestowed on her, life in the top story of the sugar refinery was dull and she was beginning to hanker after excitement. Fort Royal, in her childish eyes, seemed to be a big place, humming with life and activity. She cherished, too, in her heart a curious prophecy which a native woman named Euphemia had made to her. This woman, who, though she had negro blood in her veins, was reputed to be descended from the aboriginal Carib Indians, the

earliest inhabitants of Martinique, had declared that Josephine would one day be Queen of France though she would not die Queen of France.

The girl informed her parents and also most of her acquaintances about this prophecy. Her mother scouted it, but it made an impression on her father's superstitious mind, and may even have determined his actions at a later period. A playmate, the son of a neighbouring planter, whose ancestors had fled from Scotland after the defeat of Bonnie Prince Charlie, seems to have inferred that the prophecy must apply also to himself. At the age of twelve this boy, whom we know only as "William," called Josephine his "sweetheart."

A great deal of mystery surrounds the figure of William, but about his attachment to Josephine there is no doubt. In the tropics children of European descent mature quickly. At ten years of age Josephine stood on the threshold of womanhood and was already thirsty for admiration. She was already, too, possessed of considerable ability of the kind which can be acquired only in the school of life. Her father's attitude towards her mother and herself had shown her that a divided authority can be turned to advantage, and that men are no match for women on woman's own ground. Josephine has stated that she left home to go to Fort Royal with the greatest regret; it is difficult to find evidence of much regret on the part of her mother, who did not send either of her other daughters away from her when they reached the age at which her eldest had left home. Josephine, at the age of ten, was a well-built girl with the suppleness of figure which comes from plenty of exercise in the open air. She had beautiful blue eyes, but her chestnut hair was not very abundant. A strong, rather aggressive nose detracted a little from an expression of gentleness. She was accustomed to

weep at very slight provocation, but her tears, like her laughter, soon passed. Even in the sugar refinery she had developed a taste for pretty clothes, and knew how to wear them.

"I ran, I jumped, I danced from morning to night," she said about this period of her life. "No one restrained the wild movements of my childhood."

Her father gave her the nickname of "Geyette."

## CHAPTER II

## MADAME RENAUDIN*

The household at Fort Royal into which Josephine entered lay under a cloud. Madame Tascher, the girl's grandmother, had two daughters, but only one of them lived with her. The other, who was always referred to as "Madame Renaudin," had gone to France three years before Josephine's birth, leaving her husband in Martinique. There were various accounts current about the reasons for this extraordinary behaviour. The reason given by her family for Madame Renaudin's journey was the determination she had reached to obtain in the French courts a separation from her husband. She had accused her husband of being brutal to her, and had declared, before she went away, that their tempers were incompatible. News had come back from France that the courts had granted Madame Renaudin's plea and, in addition, had awarded her substantial alimony. Why, then, did she not return to her native island?

Madame Tascher, her mother, and Mademoiselle Rosette Tascher, her sister, were alike silent on this subject. And so also was Madame Tascher's eldest son, the Baron Tascher, Commander of the Fort, who was married and had an official residence. The influential positions which these folk occupied in the public and social life of the town made them, perhaps, more reticent than they would otherwise have been, though the subject was evidently a sore one. But local gossip supplied all the information which decent feeling with-

* See note 2.

held. Josephine, who always kept on good terms with servants and slaves, soon learned the facts about her missing aunt. They were as follows: In the year 1756 a naval officer named François de Beauharnais* was appointed governor of the island of Martinique and came with his wife and child to live at Fort Royal. There he met Madame Renaudin and fell in love with her. It was agreed between them that she should go, alone, to France, to institute proceedings for divorce and remain there until, Beauharnais' governorship having expired, he should be able to join her.

This plan was carried out, but not before, rather unseasonably in the circumstances, a second child had been born to Beauharnais. There was no public scandal about this infant at the time of his birth, but when, later, on Beauharnais' return to France, the child was left by its parents in the charge of Madame Tascher, the suggestion was made that Madame Renaudin and not Madame Beauharnais was its mother. Be this as it may, young Alexander de Beauharnais was brought up until he was nine years of age by Madame Tascher (Josephine's grandmother) and her daughter, Mademoiselle Rosette Tascher. During this period Beauharnais' wife left him and Madame Renaudin took her place. Beauharnais, who, on his return from Martinique, had been created Marquis de la Ferté Beauharnais by Louis XVI., sent for his younger son shortly after he was told of the death of his wife.

The Tascher family had not disowned Madame Renaudin. On the contrary, the fact that she was living with the Marquis de la Ferté Beauharnais seems to have been regarded by them with complaisance. Both the Baron Tascher and his brother Joseph, Josephine's father, kept up a regular correspondence with their

* See note 3.

sister in France. For the purpose of this correspondence the idea was maintained that Madame Renaudin and the Marquis were merely devoted friends.

The Baron was known to the inhabitants of Fort Royal as "The Chevalier," a title of which he was proud. He had distinguished service to his credit in the business of defending the island against the English, and wore the Cross of St. Louis. He was a plump fellow, as genial as his brother Joseph was morose, and he took his duties as Commander of the Fort with a seriousness that brooked no levity. His mother and sister held this excellent son and brother in the reverence to which his qualities of heart and his high office in the State so justly entitled him, but his sister-in-law, Josephine's mother, seems to have been less sensible of his claims to honour. The Baron did not like Josephine's mother, and, when he got to know her, he did not like Josephine either.

There is a singular lack of information about Josephine's schooldays. She was a day scholar at the convent, and she spent a good part of her holidays with her grandmother, returning home somewhat infrequently, considering that her home was so near. She learned very little, though this may have been the fault of her teachers. Apparently, the love affair with William continued from time to time, but there were distractions. The Baron's position made his niece a conspicuous figure. But, in spite of this advantage, nobody seems to have wanted to marry her, and, consequently, when she was fifteen she returned home again to live in the sugar refinery with her father and mother and sisters.

Josephine was now a woman. Her mother, and her father, too, were most anxious that she should marry. Her companions were not her sisters, aged thirteen and a half and twelve, but the negro girls on the plantation.

She liked to lie in a hammock surrounded by these black admirers, who told her all the gossip, and declared that she had been sent to them by Providence to temper the blast of her mother's asperity.

Madame Tascher La Pagerie made no secret of her preference for her younger daughters. The elder of these, Desirée, had grown up a very pretty woman, so pretty, indeed, that Josephine was called ugly by comparison. Jealousy in these circumstances is excusable. But Josephine had reasons at this time other than her sister's good looks to feel jealous of Desirée. Her aunt, Madame Renaudin, had written to her father, asking him to send a portrait of Desirée to France for submission to her friend the Marquis, and had disclosed the fact that, if the portrait was approved, an offer of marriage with Alexander, the Marquis' younger son, would follow. The portrait was duly made and sent across the sea.

Josephine, who had heard so much about Alexander from her aunt and grandmother, would have been less than human if she had not felt envious of her sister's good luck.

Her trial, however, did not last long. Before a reply from Madame Renaudin could be received, Desirée sickened of a tropical fever and died on October 16, 1777. A few months after Desirée's death—for posts were slow and very uncertain—a letter came from the Marquis himself, addressed to Joseph Tascher La Pagerie. It ran:

"My children possess ample incomes, each one inheriting some 40,000 livres per year, and it rests with you, my dear friend, whether one of your daughters may not share that of my Chevalier (Alexander). The respect and attachment he feels for Madame Renaudin impels him most ardently to desire union with one of her nieces. He seems to think that the second (Desirée) would be of the age most suitable for him.

"I myself regret that your eldeſt daughter (Josephine) is not some years younger, as she certainly should have the preference; but I muſt confess to you that there seems to me too little difference between her age, fifteen and a half, and my son's, which is only seventeen. However, this is one of those occasions in which the feelings of a parent muſt yield to circumſtances."

The Marquis was good enough to add that he did not require a dowry with Desirée. He wrote in the same terms, at the same time, to Madame Tascher La Pagerie, Josephine's mother, adding to this letter the observation:

"Not that anyone has said any but agreeable things of your eldeſt daughter; but we fear she is too old, relatively, to my son's age. He is well worthy of your regard, madame, and if, as I expect, mademoiselle, your daughter, of whom I have received such charming portraits, resembles you, my dear madame, then I shall have no fear for the happiness of my son."

The Marquis wrote also to Madame Tascher at Fort Royal and to the Baron, upon whom he urged: "Use all your efforts, my dear Baron, to induce your brother and siſter-in-law to send their second daughter to France." This letter is remarkable because, in point of fact, the old Marquis viewed the alliance he was now proposing with considerable reluctance. The key to the myſtery, however, is not far to seek. Madame Renaudin was determined to effect a more solid union between the Marquis' family and her own than that which, at the moment, united them. Her husband, M. Renaudin, ſtill lived, and so long as he continued to live she could not marry the Marquis. The Baron received a letter from his siſter at the same time. In this Madame Renaudin expressed feelings about young Alexander which were maternal in their warmth. He possessed, she said, "the beautiful qualities of soul and heart so blended that no one knows him but to love." A sop to Josephine was

thrown in at the end of the letter: "This will not be the first instance," declares the writer, "of a younger sister being established before the elder; and since the age of the younger is so advantageous, we cannot but believe that Heaven has so ordered it."

Heaven's ordering, in this instance, seems to have been an accurate measure of the best terms which the Marquis was disposed to grant. It was Desirée or nothing; and so the strong prejudice against the marriage of a younger before her elder sister had, somehow or other, to be overcome.

A tactful suggestion brought Madame Renaudin's letter to a close. It was to the effect that Desirée's parents should announce that their daughter was going to France merely to complete her education, as her father had done before her; but whether this was intended to save Josephine's face or merely to divert further gossip from Madame Renaudin herself is not very clear.

The arrival of these letters, in the painful circumstances of Desirée's death, was a source of great distress to Joseph Tascher La Pagerie and his wife. Nevertheless, they soon fell to quarrelling about what ought to be done. Madame Tascher La Pagerie wanted to send Josephine to France, whereas her husband felt that Marie, the youngest, would prove a more agreeable choice. He wrote to the Marquis suggesting Marie, and saying that he took the liberty to submit:

> "That the third and youngest might be found available. She is now eleven and a half years of age; of a gay and lively disposition, *naif* and sensible. She promises well as to face and figure—and education will do the rest."

This letter concluded with the assurance that its writer had great difficulty in inducing his wife to agree to the separation, but that he had, at last, prevailed over her

disinclination and would sail with his daughter at once. No sooner, however, was this letter despatched than Madame changed her mind, if indeed she had ever really fallen in with her husband's wishes. She declared that Marie should not go to France, and she summoned her mother, Madame des Verges de Sannois, to support her. These two respectable women had no liking for the favours of Madame Renaudin. Joseph was in a difficulty; he fell back on his knowledge that his wife was ready to part with Josephine, and wrote to his sister:

"The eldest, you are aware, has been home from the convent for some time, and as she has frequently desired me to take her to France, she will be, I fear, a little put out by your evident preference for the younger. She has a very lovely complexion, beautiful eyes, handsome arms, a shapely figure, and a remarkable aptitude for music.

"I furnished her with a teacher of the guitar while she was in the convent, and she profited well by her lessons and has a very charming voice. It is a pity that she cannot be sent to France to complete her education, so well begun; and if it were only in my power I would send the two together. But how can I separate a mother from her two remaining daughters so soon after the third has been snatched from her by death?"

A quick reply came from Madame Renaudin, who wrote:

"Come to us, my dear brother; come with one of your daughters or with two. Whatever you do we shall find agreeable and we shall not doubt you will be guided by Providence, who knows better than we what is best for us. You are acquainted with our sincere desires. We wish for one of your daughters. The Chevalier (Alexander) deserves to be made perfectly happy, and you alone, perhaps, are the one best able to declare which one possesses the requisite qualities. So act accordingly."

Providence, to Joseph, meant his wife. And her mind was made up. So he wrote again:

"You know, my dear sister, the blind devotion of most of our Creole mothers for their children. Not only is 'Manette' (Marie) opposed to the voyage, but so are her mother and grandmother—and you know what that means! If I had but the means I would start immediately with the eldest, who not only wishes to see *la belle France,* but is consumed with a desire to see her dear aunt. Only two things prevent me: a lack of means and the fact that Josephine was fifteen years old yesterday. She is, likewise, well developed for her age; indeed, for the last five or six months has seemed to be nearer eighteen than fifteen."

After this candid, but in the circumstances damaging, admission Joseph Tascher La Pagerie recapitulated Josephine's good points:

"She has, as I have written you, a happy disposition, plays a little on the guitar, has a good voice and a liking for music, in which she will sometime become proficient."

Then he adds, almost with a groan:

"But, alas! I fear she will not fulfil your expectations on account of the objection you have to her age."

Madame Renaudin was nothing if not practical. She realized that it was no use troubling further about Marie, and resolved to accept Josephine. The Marquis soon fell in with her wishes and sent a somewhat reluctant request to Joseph for his eldest daughter. Joseph at once decided to sail, but, unluckily, at that very time peace was concluded between France and the rebellious American subjects of the King of England. England and France went to war again and the seas became unsafe. So Joseph postponed his journey and Josephine went back for a time to her grandmother's house at Fort Royal, where she met large numbers of French officers on their way to America. There is no record that any of these wished

to marry her, though, doubtless, as the Baron's niece, she had her fill of entertainment. The voyage to France began late in the year 1779; at the end of October Josephine landed with her father and her Aunt Rosette at Brest.

## CHAPTER III

## AN UNHAPPY MARRIAGE*

Alexander de Beauharnais was disappointed. He had hurried to meet his future bride at Brest—with Madame Renaudin panting after him. When the meeting was over he wrote to his father:

"You will perhaps find her less pretty than you had expected, but her modesty and sweetness of character surpass anything that has been told you."

He added the information: "I found to my disgust that all the town seemed to be informed of the nature of our errand, which I had thought was secret." Madame Renaudin had arrived by this time. She, too, wrote to the Marquis, telling him, slyly, that Alexander was "very much occupied at present, very much absorbed with your future daughter-in-law." To this letter Alexander was induced to add a postscript, in which, however, he made no mention of Josephine's looks. They travelled quickly to Paris and arrived there on November 10. The Marquis received Josephine with much kindness and installed her and her father and aunt in his own house.

The contrast between this impressive establishment and the sugar refinery might very well have turned the girl's head, but Josephine's head was not turned. She seems to have realized with shrewdness exactly where she stood and to have done her best to make herself agreeable to Alexander. His conviction that she was "modest

* See note 4.

and sweet" was soon shared also by the Marquis. Meanwhile, Madame Renaudin laid out £1,000 of her own money on a trousseau for her niece and gave Josephine her first taste of shopping in Paris. This gift is the more remarkable that Madame Renaudin had already acquired a reputation for hoarding. But the moment emphatically demanded its sacrifice. With her new hats and frocks bestowed in the carriage beside her, the girl, early in December, drove out with her aunt to the country house at Noisy-le-Grand, where the wedding was to take place. The wedding itself, as is not remarkable in the circumstances, was a very quiet affair. It was celebrated—evidently Madame Renaudin was not superstitious—on December 13, 1779, in the parish church in the presence of Madame Renaudin, the Marquis, the Marquis' brother, Comte Claude de Beauharnais, and Josephine's aunt, Mademoiselle Rosette Tascher. Josephine's father was not present, as he was laid up with an attack of malaria. The bridegroom's elder brother, Comte François de Beauharnais, was another notable absentee.

The young couple returned to Paris and took up house with the Marquis in the Rue Thévenot. As Madame Renaudin also lived in this house Josephine did not lack companionship. Her aunt liked her and Josephine liked her aunt, but the bride of sixteen learned, nevertheless, that the Marquis, by his association with her aunt, had cut himself off from society. To the house in the Rue Thévenot came men and women who bore distinguished names, but in almost every instance they were people whose reputations were tarnished. The leaders of the social world did not visit the Marquis de Beauharnais, nor was that nobleman any longer received at Court. Josephine hoped that she and her husband would fare better; but when Alexander applied to the Court Cham-

berlain for admission to the official list his application was "postponed."*

In the circumstances this was strange. Alexander, who was an excellent dancer, had always been invited to the Court balls, and had even been called by Marie Antoinette her *beau danseur*. Later he renewed his application. He was informed that the Queen would receive the Vicomtesse de Beauharnais privately, and he and Josephine had to content themselves with this mutilated favour. It may be that the fact that Madame Renaudin was believed by some to be Alexander's mother is the true explanation of the refusal of an official reception, for, in that case, Alexander and Josephine were first cousins and their marriage fell within the prohibited degrees of the Church.

In any event, Josephine failed to realize her hope. She turned with avidity to the social life which was open to her and quickly made a large number of undesirable acquaintances. Among these was Madame Fanny de Beauharnais, the divorced wife of the Marquis' brother Comte Claude, and Madame de Montesson, the morganatic wife of the Duc d'Orleans. These new friends taught her how to spend money, if indeed she stood in any need of such teaching, and they instructed her also in the arts of pleasure. Never was more apt pupil. Before he had been married a year Alexander found that his young wife was an expensive luxury. He took fright and remonstrated with her. He then discovered Josephine's powers of weeping.

These tears were pardonable. Josephine was very young and very hungry for pleasure, whereas Alexander was a student, whose passion it was to educate all who came in contact with him. Tears were the only secure refuge from edifying discourses. They exasperated Alex-

* See note 5.

ander, however, just because they silenced him. The more he lectured the more his wife wept. His temper began to suffer and sometimes he was rough.

Roughness availed him nothing; Josephine was armed against that clumsy weapon and knew how to turn it to her advantage. Alexander found that he could get no satisfaction. Worse still, he found that people tended to sympathize with his wife and not with him. Josephine's red eyes, her pale cheeks, her look of gentle resignation, her readiness to forgive her husband and even to make excuses for him, convinced those who surrounded her that a singularly sweet nature was being grievously used. Every word of complaint spoken in that atmosphere acquired a brutal quality. Alexander felt the ground slipping from under his feet. Must he, then, allow his wife to do exactly as she pleased and spend as much as she pleased? It seemed so, since even his father was on Josephine's side.

Josephine marked the signs of sympathy with herself and ceased to speak to her husband unless he first addressed her. When he addressed her she answered him gently. He often lost his temper; he swore at her; he struck her.

Josephine told Madame Fanny and Madame de Montesson what she had to suffer,* and her friends published the information. It was a new light on Alexander's character. Hitherto he had passed for a philosopher and a devout student of Rousseau. One never knew. The husband found people treating him a little differently. He became more enthusiastic than ever about the necessity of leading one's life "in closer touch with Nature." Josephine had the advantage of him there. She knew what he was talking about.

Twice, but in private, at the Trianon, Josephine was

* See note 6.

received by the Queen; once the King was present. A public reception was never granted. The social world of the old monarchy never knew the woman who was to be the next occupant of the throne of France. When, in later days, Napoleon used to say to his wife: "Let us talk about Versailles," he was speaking under a misapprehension. Josephine's knowledge of Versailles, if she had any at all, was acquired at second hand.

Failure to secure recognition of his wife embittered Alexander still further, and quickened his determination to purge his home life of occasions of scandal. He forbade Josephine to associate with Madame Fanny, with Madame de Montesson, and even—for such is gratitude—with Madame Renaudin herself. She refused to obey him, and appealed against him to his father, the Marquis. Alexander soon found that he was not strong enough to enforce his orders.

His father began to treat him coldly. Madame Renaudin was hostile. Josephine's father and aunt, who had not yet returned to Martinique, displayed a pained surprise. Sent to Coventry for behaviour which he could not look upon as other than right and proper in the circumstances, Alexander renounced the hope he had cherished of forming and furnishing the mind of his young wife and, without giving any warning of his intention, left home and rejoined his regiment.

That unexpected move sobered everybody, and attempts were immediately made to induce him to return. His old tutor, M. Patricol, was sent to him as an ambassador of peace. The young man, who was in a very excited state of mind, poured out his grievances to his friend. He had tried his best, he said, to be a good husband to Josephine, but he had found in her a lack of confidence and an unreadiness to be guided by him, which had defeated his intention. She was totally

indifferent to his plans for her improvement; she had no real affection for him; she cared for nothing but spending his money in the company of women of bad character.

M. Patricol had a piece of news to impart. Josephine was about to become a mother.

## CHAPTER IV

## A DIVORCE SUIT

Alexander returned home and addressed himself once more to the labours of married life. On September 3, 1781, nearly two years after his wedding, he became the father of a boy, to whom the names Eugène Rose were given. Josephine was still living in the Rue Thévenot with the Marquis and Madame Renaudin. Alexander found himself alone among people, all of whom were leagued, as he thought, against him. He endured the position for a few weeks and then, for the second time, slipped away to his regiment.

He was in an agitated state of mind, and his agitation was not allayed by the rumours which began to be current about him. These rumours suggested that there was a woman in the case. Nobody seems to have known where they came from, but it is not difficult to guess. Alexander found his regimental duties irksome. He asked for leave and went for a tour in Italy, visiting Genoa, where he was presented to the Doge, and Rome. After six months' absence he returned in the early summer of 1782 to his wife and child in Paris.

Josephine received him kindly; his father and Madame Renaudin fell on his neck. But joy was soon quenched in new disputes. Alexander, for the third time, went back to his regiment.

His agitation had not grown less. He began to brood over his wrongs. The determination hardened in his mind to be rid of Josephine. She, for her part, went on with her life in the capital. Madame Fanny and

Madame de Montesson remained her friends. At Madame de Montesson's house she met, once again, her playmate William. Stories reached Alexander at Verdun that his wife and this William were on very intimate terms. Alexander rushed back to Paris and found that Josephine was about to become a mother for the second time. There and then he disclaimed the paternity of the child, which, it was asserted, had been conceived towards the end of June or the beginning of July, 1782—that is, shortly after his return from his tour in Italy. He told his wife that he would have nothing more to do with her and that he would bring proceedings against her in the courts.

Upheaval followed. Alexander determined to go out to Martinique, where, presumably, he might expect to obtain evidence about the relations which had formerly existed between his wife and her boy friend.* The excuse for his voyage was the part France was then playing in the American War of Independence, for Martinique was the French base. He offered his services as aide-de-camp to the Marquis de Bouillé, who was about to go out to Martinique, and, to make his application the more sure of success, got a letter from a cousin of his dead mother, the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, warmly commending him. His application was refused. He then offered his services in any capacity and sailed from Brest (where Josephine had so recently landed) on September 30, 1782. The ship reached Martinique in November.

Alexander's mission was not one he cared to discuss. His earliest act seems to have been to visit those relations of Josephine who had brought her up. He called on Madame Tascher, his wife's grandmother, and also on the Baron and his wife. Whether or not these people

* See note 7.

realized the object of his visit is doubtful. Both the Baron and his wife formed a very high opinion of Alexander, and the Baron's wife wrote to Josephine's mother at the sugar refinery that she "would be the happiest of women" if only her own son "resembled the dear Alexander." In spite of this recommendation, Josephine's father (who had returned from France earlier in the year) and mother received Alexander coldly. The young man's behaviour in the island was not well spoken of. There was talk of an affair with a woman who was an enemy of the La Pagerie family, and he was also suspected of having pursued his inquiries about Josephine among the slaves. He soon quarrelled openly with his father-in-law, and when news reached the island that Josephine had given birth to a daughter in Paris on April 10, 1783, a violent scene occurred between them. Joseph Tascher La Pagerie accused Alexander of having come to campaign, not against the enemies of France, but only against the reputation of his wife. Alexander retorted with a recital of the humiliations which Josephine had inflicted upon him. He declared that he was determined to be master in his own house.*

Alexander's anger, which was not cooled by these scenes, blinded him to the character of the part he was playing. He was an exasperated man. On his return to France he refused to listen to the plea that he should forgive and forget, and he rejected all his wife's proposals for a private separation. He was determined, he stated, not to acknowledge her daughter as his own. This child, named Hortense Eugénie, had been born at the Marquis' home—a new home—in the Rue Neuve St. Charles, and had received, as her godmother, Madame Fanny, and as her godfather Josephine's own father. Alexander refused to look at the child; he lost

* See note 8.

no time in lodging his petition. Josephine, according to the custom of the time, retired to a religious house, Panthemont. Alexander kept his son Eugène beside him, but the infant, whose fate was in question, remained with her mother. The decision of the court (the case was brought before the Parliament of Paris) can have been pleasing to neither of the parties. Hortense was declared to be the lawful daughter of Alexander, but he was given the custody of his son Eugène. In addition, he was ordered, in the event of Josephine refusing to live with him, to pay her a sum equivalent to about £500 a year, which sum was to provide for the girl Hortense as well as for herself.

Alexander chose to pay the alimony and rejoined his regiment. Josephine was left in Paris with Hortense. She continued to live with the Marquis and Madame Renaudin, but she was now crippled for money. The sum allowed her by the Parliament was wholly insufficient to enable her to lead her former life, and Madame Renaudin, as has been said, was a miser. It was not to be expected that she would open her purse very wide, or allow the Marquis to open his, to the niece who had brought all these calamities upon them. The old sailor had exhausted his last flicker of resistance to the woman with whose strength he had inebriated himself. So long as she remained to him, his son and his son's wife, too, might go to the devil. He offered no objection to Madame Renaudin's suggestion that they should all leave Paris for a time till the scandal had blown over. Madame Renaudin sold her house at Noisy-le-Grand and bought another at Fontainebleau; she directed the Marquis to sell his house in Paris and buy a house there also—for she insisted that, in the country where people talked a great deal, they must have separate establishments. Josephine was then, apparently,

allowed to act as housekeeper to her father-in-law. To complete the family circle, Madame Fanny* moved out to Fontainebleau also.

All these four people—for the baby Hortense was not in this respect more fortunate than its relatives—were the victims of unhappy marriages. Beyond that they had nothing whatever in common. The Marquis, tall, elegant, a little bewildered by the ruin of his reputation, but without a thought for anybody except himself, cared only for the sense of security which he derived from Madame Renaudin. That, in the last issue, determined all his actions. Madame Renaudin cared most of all for money, but she bore a grudge also against a world which declined to respect her. Was she not respectability itself? A Tascher of Fort Royal in Martinique? She discovered much comfort in the exercise of her religion, which was robust and thriftily conceived, like her mind, and, since M. Renaudin clung so tenaciously to his life, placed her future unreservedly in the hands of Providence. She was a pious woman, and did not for a moment permit herself to question the goodness of God, or the evident fact that she was an instrument of His will. It was not so with Madame Fanny. Here was a daughter of the eighteenth century, a poetess without beliefs, richly endowed with tolerance, a little faded, in reputation shabby enough, but possessed of a kind heart and a sense of humour. Madame Fanny perceived the funny side of Madame Renaudin without losing Madame Renaudin's friendship—no small achievement. Where was Josephine in this company? Unlike her aunt and her husband's aunt, Josephine lacked a sufficient income. Her miserly aunt was doubtless anxious to get rid of her.

But she was determined to stay; where could she go

* See note 9.

now except back to the sugar refinery? Even a position that bore some likeness to that of an upper servant was preferable to a return to Martinique.

At this juncture the Baron arrived on a visit to his native land. He was pressed into service and told Josephine that she ought to come home with him to Martinique. Under the walls of the palace of Fontainebleau he asked his niece what prospects she possessed any longer in France. A receipt still exists for £275, which he had brought with him from her father, perhaps as passage money. Josephine signed the receipt, but did not accompany the Baron.

But the end could not long be deferred; Josephine was penniless, and the creditors she had left behind her in Paris were at the door. Madame Renaudin would help only on condition that her wishes were complied with. A loan of £1,000 was arranged. In June, 1788, nine years after her arrival in France, Josephine, accompanied by Hortense, sailed from Havre for the West Indies. She spent a few nights in a little house on the sea-front while awaiting her ship.*

Josephine reached Fort Royal in August and hid herself in her father's plantations. The Taschers had exerted themselves to represent her as the innocent victim of a brutal and licentious man, but it is improbable that anybody believed them. Fort Royal had had an opportunity of forming its own opinion of Alexander, and all its inhabitants knew the truth about Madame Renaudin. Josephine, doubtless, was looked on as a second edition—a poor one—of her aunt. She had not succeeded in securing even a foothold in the great world. The plight of the villager who tries his luck in town and is compelled to return home, beaten and penniless, is always a sorry one. In this case there was the added

* See note 10.

ignominy of Alexander's labours as a private detective and the equivocal verdict of the Parliament of Paris. But Josephine was not unduly cast down. What people thought about her affected her much less than what she thought about herself. That had never, for an instant, been in doubt. Her tears flowed freely as she displayed to her father and mother, and even to the slaves, the grievous wounds which an unworthy spouse had inflicted on a very loving heart.

## CHAPTER V

## RECONCILIATION

JOSEPHINE remained with her parents in Martinique for two years. During these years she rarely left her father's plantation.

Joseph Tascher La Pagerie was not doing well in business and was in straitened circumstances. He was ill, too, and seems to have lived in a constant state of gloom. His wife, on the contrary, maintained her good spirits. Their youngest daughter, Marie, now a woman of twenty-two years of age, was their chief consolation. How did the wife of Alexander de Beauharnais fare in this rather melancholy household? How did the child Hortense, then five years of age, fare? Hortense, in her *Memoirs,* which are very inexact about dates and times, relates:

"On arriving at Martinique we were received by my mother's family with transports of joy. The quiet life that we led, sometimes in one house, sometimes in another (Madame Tascher La Pagerie had an estate of her own), must have suited my mother, for we remained more than three years out of France.

"I can recall only one particular incident of our stay at Martinique, but it is vividly imprinted on my imagination. I was five years old and had never shed a tear. Everybody had spoiled me and no harsh word had ever rebuked me nor thwarted my wishes. One day, while we were on my grandmother's plantation, I was playing beside a table on which she was counting money. Now and then a coin fell to the floor and I hastened to pick it up and give it back to her. I saw her make a dozen little piles of copper pennies, which she placed on a chair when she left the room, taking the rest of the money with her. I do not know how I conceived the idea that she had given me those pennies to dispose of, but I felt so convinced of this that I

gathered the separate piles into my skirt, which I tucked up so as to form a kind of pocket."

Hortense distributed the pennies among the slaves. She continues:

"When my money was gone and I was surrounded by all these blacks, who kissed my hands and feet, I returned to the house triumphant, filled with joy and pride at all these benedictions. But at home everything was in a state of commotion. My grandmother was looking for her money, and the poor servants were all quaking lest they should be accused. In a flash I realized the truth and, with despair, was obliged to admit my guilt. I confessed at once to my grandmother, but what that confession cost me! I had lied and I had stolen, and I heard myself reproached with it."

Madame Tascher La Pagerie had a quick temper and a vigorous tongue, and it is probable that Josephine, as well as Hortense, was compelled to listen to her reproaches. The debt of £1,000 to Madame Renaudin, which must have shocked the thrifty and honest mind of the planter's wife, no doubt furnished an occasion of plain speaking. In any event, it was paid, in instalments, during Josephine's stay with her parents. Who supplied the money is not known, but the presumption must be that it was not Josephine. Her income was small and uncertain. She was never, so far as is known, entirely free of debt at any time.

The French Revolution began in 1789, a year after Josephine's arrival at Martinique. In the following year trouble with the slaves, who had been liberated by the French Parliament, began. Fort Royal was the scene of some bloody encounters. Josephine, according to her daughter, left her home soon after these encounters began and came to live at Government House in Fort Royal. No doubt the Baron, her uncle, had something to do with this, for he played an important part in

attempting to quell the revolutionaries, mostly negroes, who were threatening the colony. In any case, Josephine became friendly with a number of naval officers from the frigates which had been brought to Fort Royal to overawe the rebels.*

"One night," says Hortense, "my mother received word that the cannons (of the frigates) were to open fire on the town of Fort Royal the following day. She set out instantly to seek refuge aboard a frigate whose captain she knew. As we crossed the fields, which are called savannahs, a cannon ball fell close beside us. The next day the town was seized by the revolutionists and the French ships were ordered (by the revolutionists) to return to their anchorage, under threat of being fired on by all the guns of the Fort.

"The crew of our vessel announced their intention of returning to France, and promptly left the coast, but the threat was carried out; balls were fired. Not a single one touched us; destiny spared us. So here we were, unexpectedly embarked without having taken leave of anyone."

This account, whatever may be thought of its accuracy, has the merit of explaining why Josephine returned to France at that particular moment. There is no need in face of it to assume, as has often been assumed, that Alexander had repented of his suspicions and offered to forgive his wife.

The voyage to France nearly proved disastrous, for the frigate, the *Sensible,* went aground off the African coast. But she was refloated, and reached Toulon early in 1790. At Toulon, Josephine learned that her husband was a prominent member of the Revolutionary Party.

This was a wholly unexpected stroke of luck. Josephine, congratulating herself on the chance which had brought her back to France at so favourable a moment, prepared to gather her humble share of Alexander's prosperity. She hurried to Fontainebleau.

* See note 11.

Madame Renaudin, mollified by the repayment of her £1,000, and excited, like everybody else, by the disruption of society, received her, if not with enthusiasm, at least with satisfaction. Alexander's rise to fame as a Liberal politician and his consequent need of someone to act as hostess for him, no doubt encouraged the hope that a reconciliation between him and Josephine might be brought about.

Josephine, with admirable charity, expressed herself willing to forgive and forget all the wrongs which had been done against her. She had not ceased, so she said, to love Alexander, and her only wish, now, was to gather her children once more under his roof. These excellent sentiments were duly reported by Madame Renaudin, but they made a less favourable impression than had been expected. Alexander did not refuse to be reconciled to his wife, but he refused to live with her. In token of such goodwill as he felt, he sent his son Eugène to Josephine.

She had to content herself with this comfort and with whatever reflected glory Fontainebleau could give her. Through eyes continually bathed in tears she watched her husband playing his part in the new Paris which held the King and Queen prisoners in the Tuileries. Why was she not with him? She was not concerned about the underlying causes of the events now proceeding around her; her only desire was to get back to Paris. But that she failed to respond, in some part, to the sense of a relaxed discipline, which was ubiquitous throughout France, is improbable. She had nothing to lose from a relaxation of discipline, and liberty had therefore no terrors for her.

Alexander cherished a different order of ideas, but there is little to show that his understanding of the crisis, in which he was involved, was clearer than hers. His espousal of liberty was not less licentious on its own

plane, and he seems to have thought that the moral enthusiasm which inspired him and his fellow Liberals was the motive of the changes proceeding in the government of his country. A generous, if costly, mistake into which Josephine was in small danger of falling. Moral enthusiasm played its part in the French Revolution; it is even an arguable proposition that most of the mistakes made by Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette were inspired by it. But the immediate causes of the Revolution were not moral. They lay in a conflict between the national instinct of self-preservation and the incompetence of the Central Government. France was vaguely uneasy.

The nature of this uneasiness is at once obscure and self-evident. It is not enough to say that glory had forsaken the nation, because that word has wider implications and richer associations in French than in English ears. The Government of Versailles had lost the power to kindle imagination, and France is accustomed to warm herself at that fire. It had lost the capacity to inspire confidence, and the French mind requires for its comfort a *chef de famille*. "The victory of Fontenoy," said Napoleon, "gave the Bourbons a fresh half-century of power." Louis XVI. had not afforded his people a single thrill.

In these circumstances the burden of the taxes pressed miserably. Those who were compelled to pay—the nobility and the clergy paid nothing—fell into the habit of men who feel that no advantage is being secured by their sacrifice, and grew morose and inclined to resentment. The middle class, becoming richer every year, nursed its social grievances; the peasants dwelt upon their disabilities. Had plain folk no redress? The Liberals were listened to, rapturously at this moment, because, speaking with the tongues of Rousseau and the pamphleteers, they professed and expounded knowledge of the rights of plain folk. This was not preaching a

crusade but apologizing for it, a distinction the importance of which soon grows clear when the crusade has won victories and no longer stands in need of apologists. That period had not yet arrived.

On the contrary, the Assembly, of which Alexander was a member, continued to express its respect for royalty, even Robespierre publicly refusing to imagine France without her King. Louis XVI., it was confidently predicted by the Liberals, would, as a sequel to the expulsion of autocracy from his bed, make Liberty his spouse. Had he not already, before there was any talk of revolution, made her his mistress? The constitution which the King had desired to bestow on France went farther actually, it was pointed out, in the way of reform than that which France was now concerned to bestow on herself.

The King's mind seems to have been as heavily confused as the minds of most of his councillors. He had failed to recognize the direction of the hurricane which, in a night, had swept him and his family from Versailles and flung them, shipwrecked, into inhospitable Paris. His worthy brain was filled with the idea that it was his absolutism to which his people objected, and, since he objected to it himself, he was not unwilling to meet them. His own hands, on the day following the taking of the Bastille, had pinned the tricolour cockade to his coat, and were, later, to put the red cap on his head. This enormously fat, pleasant, honest man, with his exasperating taste for making and mending locks, asked nothing better than to be relieved of the irksome responsibilities of government. He failed to see that he had committed the only sin which France has never forgiven in her rulers. He was inglorious, uneventful, and his virtues damned him. The political effect was a weakening, in critical times, of the ties which bound the nation

to its Central Government, and there is no danger to which France, and especially Paris, reacts more quickly or with more exquisite sensitiveness. This royal husband, whose relations with the wife he had never known how to control, were the subject of ribaldry, who clung to his hearth like a bourgeois of the Rue St. Honoré, who loved peace and wished to see his people happy, contented, and untroublesome, threatened the fabric of a nation which, woman-like, loves and needs a master. Had Louis possessed the soul of a king he could have resolved his difficulties; it is not true to say that he was the victim solely of the excesses of his predecessors on the throne. The middle class, formidable architect of his ruin, asked in the beginning only a bare recognition, and would have received that recognition as humbly as, later, it ate of the crumbs which fell from Napoleon's table.

Here again, however, it is necessary to explain and qualify. If the uneasiness to which the King's vacillation gave rise expressed itself in a revolt against his absolutism, it is not less true that the spirit of the age was critical of all authority. It had been the King's task, as Mirabeau laboured to tell him, to discard those of his prerogatives which were outworn, but to uphold worthily, at the same time, his office of leadership. Time and circumstance had made him the father of a nation approaching adolescence; he recognized the fact—his efforts to introduce reforms prove it—but was incapable of effecting the necessary adjustments in the existing system. Like a father who is companion to his growing lad one day and dictator the next, without at any time winning the boy's admiration or confidence, he got well hated for his stupidity and received no thanks for his kindness. The representatives of an exasperated nation, in which, however, the filial sentiment remained strong, resolved to do for him what he could not do for himself,

and, with rather touching solicitude, placed him at the head of its revolt against his leadership. The lively paradox was justified by declaring that men and women are essentially good and noble, and that, consequently, it is only necessary to remove all restraints upon them to discover their powers of restraining themselves. In other words, a free nation would love and serve its King better than a nation in chains.

This was Lafayette's and also, to some extent, Mirabeau's attitude. Alexander de Beauharnais shared it, and it supplied the motive of his actions. Unfortunately, event after event, since the meeting of the States-General at Versailles in May, 1789, had thrown discredit upon it. Academic Liberalism, in association with the system of absolutism which Richelieu had created and Louis XIV. had known how to consolidate, proved a King Log. The pretended partnership between King Log and King Louis only intensified confusion and multiplied dangers. That was soon apparent to the two people who dominated the situation—namely, the Queen and Mirabeau. Marie Antoinette stood for the old system, Mirabeau for the new. The phase of the Revolution which began when the Paris mob marched to Versailles and took possession of the King—and later, in a sense, of the Assembly also—is dominated by the subterranean struggle between them. Mirabeau in that affair must be separated from all his associates. This younger son of an illustrious house was neither philosopher nor fanatic. A whimsical quality, gay and good humoured, obscured in him ambition supported by the coolest judgment. He was rake, knave, bully, gentleman. His past, flaming with rebellion, refused scrutiny even by indulgent eyes; but he had made France forget it in an instant when, in the name of the people, he dared the King. He could growl "like a lion" and roar, too, on occasion, but his supple intellect

had his feelings in check. Mirabeau's great shaggy head harboured no illusions; his stout body, sated with pleasure, nibbled at by disease, refused speculative enterprises. He was ready to proclaim that King Louis reigned in the name of Liberty on condition that he himself was made high priest of the new goddess. Louis should wear the crown; Mirabeau wield the sceptre.

So, after having defied the King, he took the King's pay and gave advice like a barrister briefed in a difficult case. His shrewd eyes perceived the meaning of the capture of King and Parliament by the capital, and saw clearly the dangers lurking in Paris. He urged Louis to transfer his Court to Rouen or some other safe place, declaring himself, by this recommendation, the first of the Federalists. He was prepared, in that event, to furnish the French people with the master for whom they hankered, and even with the glory which alone could establish mastery. The King liked the idea; but the Queen, who knew her Mirabeau, shrank from him, afraid of his uncleanness, though she met him alone one night, under the stars, in the gardens of St. Cloud.

Mirabeau's secret intrigues with royalty did not interfere with his public professions of Liberalism, and these public professions were taken by Alexander de Beauharnais and many others at their face value. Nothing could shake Alexander's faith in an organized liberty nor deflect him from his purpose of helping to establish and support it. Doubtless he judged others by himself, though his intercourse with Josephine might have been expected to temper his belief in human nature. A mind, at once vain and mystical, led him to exalt philosophy above experience, so that long after the King's inability to oppose the wishes of the Queen was known, and even after Mirabeau's death, this shallow egoist adhered to the idea that King Log and King Louis, hand in hand,

were about to lead the French people into that earthly paradise about which he was so well informed.

The next phase of the Revolution is filled with this dream. Mirabeau, on his death-bed, foresaw its evolution and died talking about it. Liberty, he perceived, must look for her high priest elsewhere than among the Liberals. As for the King, since he knew neither how to reign himself nor how to choose a man capable of reigning instead of him, he was lost. Threatened by disruption, France, led by Paris, would assuredly find a master, who would be required, since it was the fashion, to wear the red cap; a sword would be thrust into his hands.

The Liberals carried Mirabeau's body to the Panthéon. In his dingy palace Louis grew fatter from want of exercise and wondered how long it would be before he could hunt again. He was still inclined, when the Queen was not beside him, to his clownish flirtation with his Parliament. The Assembly busied itself making a constitution, "like a pudding," in Arthur Young's phrase, and listened to fresh harangues from the Liberals about the goodness of human nature; the extreme Radicals, on the other hand, called attention to the ruin of the finances, the break-up of government, the hunger of the poor, and the gathering of hostile armies beyond the frontiers. Neither King Log nor King Louis inspired the confidence of these realists, among whom were numbered Danton and Robespierre, whose strength was drawn from the streets of the capital. While Alexander de Beauharnais won a measure of admiration by reason of the elevation of his mind and the excellence of his knowledge, Danton, night after night, was making the candles in the club of the Cordeliers flicker with his great voice bawling that France was ruined for want of a man with guts.

Ugly faces listened to Danton, who possessed the ugliest face of them all. Pock-marked, coarse-featured, big of brow, bigger of mouth, this thuggish apostle preached the gospel of liberty according to thieves and vagabonds. But a pure flame leaped among the smoke. Danton, like Mirabeau, knew what France wanted. Unlike Mirabeau, he knew how to get it for her. Away with the kings, away with the philosophers! To arms, citizens!

His bawlings reached the Assembly and pained its respectable members; they resounded in the streets and slums. At the Palais Royal tub-thumpers repeated them to gaping audiences of prostitutes and men-about-town; young noblemen debauched with kisses, leering under the lamps at the wench Liberty; stock-jobbers; swindlers; here and there a soldier of the King's Guard; a priest shambling across the city. In the kennels of the Faubourg St. Antoine a more savage note prevailed. Hungry mouths chewed Danton's words there like a cud; his words filled the whispers of thieves' kitchens warming skinny, naked bodies. Women screeched them, children too; they are all patriots and Chauvinists in the underworld. The Queen made ready to flee to the frontier with her husband and family, for she heard the wings of King Stork in the thundercloud. It was at this moment that, in accordance with the custom of changing presidents each week, Alexander de Beauharnais was chosen President of the Assembly. Political philosophers resemble dramatists in hoping, some day, to see their plays produced by living men and women. All the makers of constitutions in France during the last days of the monarchy were animated by that desire. They toiled in upper rooms upon plans to regenerate the universe, working against time lest the universe should be regenerated without them. If they

went out, it was only to expound their plans to their fellows. The basis of all the plans was the idea that France existed for the mutual comfort and advantage of Frenchmen, whereas what was really at issue, as the Parisians realized, was the power of France to exist at all. Provinces were in revolt; cities in active rebellion. With the hurricane shrieking in the rigging, the master mariners went below to dispute together about bending zephyrs to their will. The long nose of the Abbé Siéyès was prominent in these discussions. This earnest fellow, whom Mirabeau had called "Mahomet," possessed a rare understanding of the intricacies of government. Like a composer who can write a full orchestral score in an armchair, he could project a nation's life, trumpet and drum, fife and cymbals, violin and harp, on a sheet of notepaper. But his head was in the clouds. It was characteristic of all the Liberals, from Lafayette downwards, that they held little discourse with common clay except to try to knead it in fantastic shapes. They ran about, jostling each other, in a sort of ecstasy.

Behind the men were the women, Madame de Stael and the rest. Necker's daughter was in her early twenties, a young wife, thirsty for everybody's love and on the whole deserving it. The Liberals carried their visions to her drawing-room, and were overjoyed at the vigour which her sex infused into them. For her mind fed greedily on her appetites. A woman with a drooping eye for a man, libidinous of intellect, with grave brow and big, wide-set eyes, short, broad nose and pouting lips, citizen of Europe rather than of France. While he looked at her Alexander must have thought of Josephine moping at Fontainebleau. What a contrast! But Tallien as well as Siéyès visited her drawing-room, Fouché as well as Talleyrand, to say nothing of the younger men. Madame de Stael moved on two planes at once and had

passions enough for both of them. She could love; she could think. But there was a third plane which engaged her hottest desire—namely, that on which genius transmutes his vision to reality. Alas! the men of action feared her; she was blue-stocking in spite of herself, condemned, in the intervals of suckling an inept Liberalism, to submit to the trials of secret lechery. Her position as wife of the Swedish Ambassador gave her a freedom of action which few other Frenchwomen enjoyed.

Louis blinking at his Queen in his palace; Danton with the foam of his oratory on his lips; Madame de Stael entertaining the Liberals, the wits, and the gallants in her agreeable rooms—there is Paris in the early summer of the year 1791. There were few candles lit in the Tuileries, fewer still at the Cordeliers; all the glitter belonged to the Swedish Ambassador's wife and her friends. But the lightnings were hidden in the darkness; only Danton—that is, Paris—and the Queen mattered.

It was the Queen's move. She persuaded the King, whose conscience was roused by the civil Constitution of the Clergy, to escape with her and their children out of France. The supreme folly of this act lay in the suggestion it conveyed that the Royal Family was seeking foreign help against the nation. Marie Antoinette may have recognized that, for she was aware of her extreme unpopularity; but she seems to have felt, like Mirabeau, that her husband was past saving. By removing him from the Liberals she would at least prevent a further whittling away of that sovereignty which she so ardently coveted for her son. She saw, too, that the King's flight would strike the Government like an apoplexy, and counted, it maybe, on this paralysis to restore, sooner or later, to the Dauphin all that his father had surrendered. Let Danton savage the Liberals; he and his mobs would

be incapable of sustained leadership. The Queen, hastening fearfully by Louis' side under the guttering lamps of Paris to the carriage which was to bear them to safety, hugged in her heart, perhaps, the comfort that only her little lad could build up again what those others would assuredly pull down.

The big travelling carriage rolled on uneasy cobbles in narrow streets, which exhaled from their gutters the stenches of the city. Dark figures flitted under the lamps. She could hear, above the rattle of the coachwork, the heavy breathing of the King. But there were sweet fields to receive them and long, dim avenues of kindly trees. . . .

Alexander de Beauharnais, as it happened, was master of France that night. "I find myself," he announced from the chair of the Assembly when the news of the King's flight leaked out, "occupying, by this defection of the King, the chief place in the nation." Was the prophecy of the Carib woman to Josephine about to be fulfilled? She may very well have believed that it was. When her children appeared at a window in Fontainebleau people greeted them as "Our Dauphin and Dauphine."*

The arrest of the Royal Family at Varennes and their return, on June 26, as prisoners to Paris wrought complete disillusionment. The Liberals felt the ground rocking under their feet; Danton bellowed that his hour was come. It was in vain that Siéyès and his associates pursued their work of giving a Constitution to France: the infant had ceased to quicken. Nobody believed any longer in the good faith of the King; everybody believed that the Queen was plotting with her brother, the Emperor, the overthrow of the new France. Paris, always exquisitely sensitive to danger on the frontiers,

* See note 12.

began to growl. The royal emblems in the city were defaced and bespattered, and a petition, calling for the deposition of the King, was placed, on July 17, on the altar of the country in the Champ de Mars by the associates of Danton. It was signed by thousands of citizens. The Liberals, still demoralized by the King's flight, and now in lively fear of Danton's mob, which accused them of being Royalists at heart, lost their heads. When two men were lynched by the demonstrators in the Champ de Mars, they called up the National Guard, under Lafayette, to fire on the crowd. Paris promptly called the incident a "massacre." Measures to repress Danton's associates followed, and members of the Cordeliers Club and the Jacobin Club were proscribed. Danton, Robespierre, and Marat had to look to their safety.

The "massacre" was a naked sword between Liberalism and Radicalism; it had, in addition, other implications. Those who fell on the Champ de Mars were Parisians, those who had ordered their deaths belonged to a party which, fearing Paris, had worked consistently to diminish its importance relatively to the rest of the country. Paris swung to the Left; the Liberals, now, since the King's flight, Republicans at heart, dared not in face of this danger dispense with the prestige which royalty still enjoyed in great areas of provincial France. They exerted themselves to the utmost to induce the King to sign the new Constitution, and when they succeeded fell into transports of relief and joy. "Long live the King!" sneered the Parisians, "if he keeps his word." The Assembly, having thus completed its gestation of the Constitution, dissolved in September, 1791, dying in the child-bed of its sickly offspring.

Alexander de Beauharnais retired to his estate of Ferté Beauharnais. He went alone, well satisfied,

apparently, with all that his party had accomplished. But it was not long before, in common with everybody else, he began to feel uneasy. The King might intend to keep faith—even that was doubtful—but the influence which the Queen exerted over him was stronger than any promise he had given, and that influence was being used, day after day, against the Liberals. The Queen's hopes were fixed unalterably on her brother, the Emperor. Could a Frenchman, even a Frenchman as vain of his political sagacity as Alexander, doubt that France would rise to resist foreign interference in her domestic affairs?

In these circumstances it is not surprising that his mind turned towards his children and even towards their mother. He had met Josephine seldom since her return from Martinique, but their relations had become a little more cordial. But, whatever his faults may have been, the man was honest with himself. Scrupulousness in the matter of his feelings held him back from the reunion with his wife which she was so anxious to effect. He offered her the regard of a brother, but told her plainly that he was unable to offer a husband's love. Josephine had his consent to return to Paris to be near their children, who had been sent to school. At last, therefore, she found herself in possession of financial and social independence in the only place in the world which attracted her. She returned to the capital in October, 1791, after an absence of seven years. About this time news reached her of the deaths of her father and sister Marie, which occurred within a few months of one another. Her mother was left alone to manage the plantations as best she might at a time when revolutionary ideas were fermenting in the minds of the slaves.

## CHAPTER VI

# THE CIRCLE

The love which Josephine bore Paris gave her understanding. There were qualities in her nature which only the capital could discover—a gaiety hard and courageous, like the mirth of soldiers or prostitutes, and a tenderness, practical as that of a bitch for her litter. This daughter of virgin jungles, whose grace of movement recalled some strong, supple animal, was most completely at home in drawing-rooms, where men, unsated as yet with pleasure, accorded her a frankly sensual admiration. But she had sympathy, too, with mean streets and the struggles of cheerless motherhood, for these offended her spirit. The resentment of Paris against the Court and the Liberals was instantly communicated to her. Had she not suffered herself from the stubborn pride of the Royal Family and from Alexander's unwholesome mingling of moral enthusiasm with executive ruthlessness? She would have been less than human had she not, from the beginning, felt drawn towards the Jacobins.

The house which she rented was situated in the Rue St. Dominique, and belonged to an old friend of her Martinique days, Madame Holstein, who inhabited part of it. At first she was alone, but later on she engaged a companion, Mademoiselle de Lannoy, a young woman who talked politics all day long.

The moment was favourable to such discussion. Elections had just taken place, and the new Legislative Assembly had been constituted. This body differed in

two important respects from its predecessor, the National Assembly, of which Alexander had been an ornament: its members were all untried men, since no member of the old Assembly* was permitted to sit in the new, and its temper was decidedly less favourable to the King. Few of its members were nobles, very few were clergymen, and the great body was drawn from the middle class; even an eye so inexperienced in political observation as Josephine's could see that a definite step towards "the Left" had been taken.

The Liberals in private made no secret now of their Republican sympathies, but shrank from avowing them publicly because of their need of the King. Like Coleridge's lonely traveller, they had become aware of the "frightful fiend" which was treading close behind them, and promising vengeance for the Champ de Mars. Brissot, Roland, and Louvet, and perhaps Alexander de Beauharnais, too, would have led the attack on royalty had not Danton and, to a lesser extent, Robespierre and Marat dominated Paris, and, through Paris, the Jacobin clubs throughout France. Danton's folk were sworn to make an end of Liberalism. Policy, therefore, was determined by two contradictory ideas—namely, the disavowal of monarchy and its salvation. The new Assembly, in which Liberals predominated, decreed, a month after its election, that the *émigrés* assembled on the frontiers should be liable to the death penalty and confiscation unless they returned to France by the New Year. Three weeks later it ordained punishment for the priests who had refused to take the civic oath. Both these measures were designed to refute the accusation that their authors were King's men, for the King's brothers were among the *émigrés,* and his disinclination to impose any hardship on the clergy was well

* See note 13.

known. It was as certain as anything could be that Louis would veto both proposals, and this, in fact, happened. Danton, however, made it his business to suggest that the Liberals, in spite of their public baiting of the King, were secretly upholding him—an ugly charge when it is recalled that Paris believed firmly in an alliance of King, nobles, and priests with the Queen and her Austrian kinsfolk against the Revolution. Driven to offer further proof of their honesty, the Liberals, or "Girondins," as they were now often called, from the fact that several of their leaders came from that district, resolved upon war with Austria.

The move was an astute one. Paris, thoroughly alarmed by the massing of the *émigrés,* under Austrian protection,* near the frontiers, desired ardently to strike a blow, and would therefore support the war policy. In this way Danton's and Robespierre's position as leaders of the mob would be weakened. Again, victory would go far to restore the royal prestige—and so, also, the prestige of the Liberals—while defeat would allow the Liberals, in the name of public safety, to proscribe their enemies. In either event they stood to gain to an extent which might, in the near future, enable them finally to dispense with the monarchy.

Robespierre perceived the danger and opposed the war; so did the King—an instructive instance of the meeting of extremes. But neither was able to avert it. The Jacobin Club was split. Narbonne, the Royalist Minister, who saw in the war a means of salvation for the throne, was dismissed by Louis. The Liberals gathered strength both from the Right and from the Left, and Roland, and later Dumouriez, became ministers. Louis was compelled, on April 20, 1792, to come to the Assembly and propose that war should be

* See note 14.

declared. He enjoyed on that day the last flicker of his popularity; the members, except Robespierre's friends, shouted themselves hoarse, and Paris was not less vociferous.

The hopes of the Liberals were fixed now on military success. Lafayette went to the front, and was followed by many members of the party, including Alexander de Beauharnais (now General), who succeeded General Custines in command of the Northern Army. Alexander is described at this time by the honest Count Lavalette as possessing a cultivated mind and a calm temper.*

"He was fond of order and discipline; his activity was boundless; his perception was quick and accurate; his valour cool and brilliant. The army soon became fond of him. Modest and even a little circumspect, he showed reserve in the presence of the troops; and, as he did not say much to them, he did not inspire them with the same enthusiasm as General Custines, who liked to make speeches, knew the name of every private soldier, visited the men in the camp and hospitals, and whose blunt good humour and repartee were quoted everywhere."

All these became heroes of the hour, and Josephine doubtless had her share of reflected glory, though whether she desired to see the King's armies triumph under their Liberal leaders is open to doubt. She may have experienced a thrill, due to the contagion of excitement in the capital, but, if so, it did not last long. Defeat was immediate. The rabble of French troops which had marched into the Netherlands was flung back by the Austrians, and Mons and Lille fell into the enemy's hands. Lafayette, who commanded the army of the centre, had to retire in sympathy. Instantly Paris took fright. Had the Queen betrayed France to her nephew?† The Liberals passed from jubilation to panic,

* See note 15. † See note 16.

for Danton and Robespierre were again accusing them of being in alliance with royalty. New decrees, sops to the Parisian mob as well as attempts to fasten the odium of defeat on the King, were proposed—namely, that the non-juring* priests should be expelled, the King's Guard suppressed, and a corps of *fédérés* established near Paris. Louis surrendered his Guard, but, as had been expected, vetoed the other two proposals. It soon became apparent, however, that the anger aroused by the King's refusal was not directed solely against the King. The Liberals received a generous share of it. They were, as they realized, in a cleft stick, for they dared not take the risk of losing the support of moderate minds throughout France by an open attack on the throne. Without such support Paris would gobble them. Roland, the Minister of the Interior, therefore, urged Louis, in insolent terms, to sign the decrees, and received the dismissal he hoped for. The King summoned Dumouriez, who repeated Roland's advice. On this being rejected again, Dumouriez resigned. These moves had the effect of casting doubt on the alleged secret understanding between the Liberals and the King.

The need for the King, nevertheless, remained as imperative as ever. It was, therefore, necessary to induce him to sign the decrees and so relieve the Assembly—that is, the Liberals—of the unwelcome task of attacking him openly. Brissot, the chief exponent of the war policy, conceived the idea of out-Heroding Herod by organizing a popular demonstration. The Paris mob, Danton's mob, should be induced to play the Assembly's game by frightening the King into signing. The plot succeeded. On June 20, 1792,† the mob surrounded the Tuileries, demanding to see its Sovereign; contrary to plan, however, it quickly got out of hand, broke into

* See note 17.

† See note 18.

the palace, and threatened the Royal Family with violence. Only Louis' courage saved the lives of himself and his children. He supplied the leaders with wine and talked to them during several hours; he appeared, too, at a window, wearing the red cap. But he promised nothing.

Next day, when France heard the news, evidence was forthcoming that the monarchy retained some at least of its popularity. Addresses poured into the palace congratulating the King on his escape and denouncing the ruffians who had threatened him, and 20,000 of the citizens of Paris associated themselves with this protest. King and Queen took heart, and resolved to persist in their opposition to the Liberals. They even refused the help which Lafayette had hurried from the front to offer them. This decision may well rank as the most important taken during the course of the Revolution. For, lacking victory on the frontier, the Liberals could not dispense with the King, while the King, unless he was prepared to ally himself to his country's enemies, could not in the same circumstances dispense with the Liberals. Louis, as it happened, had already abandoned France and was in touch with Brunswick, the leader of the allied Austrian and Prussian army, which was mustering in Belgium for the invasion of France.

Brunswick's chances were so good, in face of the defeated and dispirited French troops, that on July 25, a month after the attack of Brissot's mob on the Tuileries, he went out of his way to inform Paris about his intentions when he should reach the city. "The Allies," he proclaimed, "will enter France to restore the royal authority, and will visit the Assembly and the city of Paris with military execution if any further outrage is offered to the King."

With the pistol at her head, Paris displayed that intrepid courage which, from one century to another, has given her the leadership of France. The Assembly, on learning of Brunswick's proclamation, had declared the country "in danger"; but the mob, to whom Danton had been nursing-mother, took possession of the Hôtel de Ville and set up there a revolutionary Commune. The "frightful fiend" trod now on the traveller's heels. Fear-stricken, undecided, irresolute, the Liberals,* from their seats in Parliament, gazed at the hideous faces of the *sans-culottes* massing in the sections under the guidance of the revolutionary clubs and tried to discern, behind this grim rabble, the features of its leaders. Was Danton† there? On August 10 the attack on the palace began, a real attack this time, and before noon the King and his family had taken refuge in the Assembly and were shut up in a reporters' box while the members—only a third of them were present—decided upon their fate. Louis had come to the Parliament at last; but with the sound of Danton's guns and the shrieks of Danton's victims in their ears, the Liberals shrank away from him. It was decreed that the King was suspended in the exercise of his office, that the Assembly should be dissolved and a National Convention summoned to draft a new Constitution, and that the government should be confided, in the meanwhile, to an executive council of which Roland and Danton, among others, should be members.

Danton's inclusion in this essentially Liberal or Girondist body is of great significance. Louis had surrendered his crown to Paris; it was Danton who led the capital. There is a sense in which it is true to say that Liberalism, having failed to ally itself to the King of France, was making a bid for the co-operation

* See note 19. † See note 20.

of the King of the Cordeliers, who had just supplanted him.

Louis and his family were removed to their prison in the Temple through crowds which included Captain* Napoleone Buonaparte, of the Royal Artillery, an officer twenty-three years old, who had just been acquitted of the charge of overstepping his powers during a riot in his native Corsica. This officer described, some twenty-five years later, his experiences that day, and they merit reproduction:

"At the sound of the alarm bell," he said, "and on the news that the Tuileries was being attacked, I ran to the Carrousel, to Fauvelet, brother-in-law of Bourienne, who had a furniture shop there.† He had been my comrade at the Military School at Brienne. From that house I could, at my ease, observe all the events of that day. Before I had reached the Carrousel, I had met, in the Rue des Petits-Champs, a group of hideous men with a head on the top of a pike. Seeing me passably dressed and with the appearance of a gentleman, they came towards me to make me cry 'Long live the Nation,' which I did without difficulty, as may well be imagined.

"The palace was attacked by the vilest of mobs. The King undoubtedly had for his defence as large a force as the Convention afterwards had,‡ and the enemies of the latter were far more disciplined and redoubtable. The greater part of the National Guard was for the King, one must do it that justice.

"The palace carried and the King in the care of the Assembly, I ventured to enter the Tuileries Gardens. Never again on any of my battlefields did I get such an impression as that given me by the masses of the corpses of the Swiss Guards; perhaps it was the narrow space that aggravated the numbers, or the effect may have been due to its being my first experience of that kind. I saw well-dressed women indulge in acts of the utmost indecency towards the corpses. I visited all the neighbouring cafés; everywhere passions were violent; rage was in all hearts; it was visible in every face, although they were very

* See note 21. † See note 22. ‡ See note 23.

far from being the common people; and it was evident that these places were occupied, every day, by the same clients, for, though there was nothing peculiar in my dress, perhaps because my expression was more calm, it was plain to me that I excited hostile and defiant looks as a stranger, and therefore suspected."

Napoleon expressed, further, the opinion that, had Louis shown himself on horseback, the victory would have been his.

"One has to see things at close quarters," he had written to his brother in July, "to perceive that enthusiasm is no more than enthusiasm and that the French are an ancient people who are out of control."

Josephine was warned* in advance of the attack on the Tuileries, and took the precaution of bringing her son and daughter home from school before August 10. This warning must have reached her from her new friends of the Jacobin Club, who alone knew the moment fixed for the attack, and the probability is that it came from Tallien. She was beginning to interest herself in politics, or rather in politicians, for her mind was better adapted to the study of men than to the study of their enthusiasms; the necessity which her extravagance laid on her of increasing her income and her natural instinct determined the type of her friends. There is not so much as a hint that the idealism of the Girondists awakened an echo in her spirit, and it is certain that she had nothing to do with any of those leaders of the Jacobins whose fanaticism was the expression of a moral outlook, however distorted. Carnot, Robespierre, even Danton, knew her not. It was among the army contractors, the merchants of disaster, that her companions were to be found.

* See note 24.

Tallien was of these. Barras, too. Tallien's tall figure and ugly, bristly head became a familiar sight to Alexander de Beauharnais' children when they returned home to the Rue St. Dominique after the closing of the schools by the Jacobins. The son of a major-domo, and at this period working as a journalist on the *Moniteur,* he was a man who conformed in many ways to the type for which she had shown so marked a preference after her marriage; a gay dog, if a surly, with no scruples, who scattered the money he had won at the gaming-tables of liberty. The same could not be said of Barras. This fellow, too, was gay—much gayer than his companion, for he was of gentle birth—wholly debauched and wholly unscrupulous, but he had an eye to the main chance, which made him keep his pockets buttoned. Such men are quick to notice even the smallest demands on their purses; it was Barras who said of Josephine that she was capable of drinking gold from the skull of her lover.

These men, extreme revolutionaries, belonged to a different order of character from their leaders. They were "out on the make," climbers, lovers of liberty of easy virtue. Their hatred of the monarchy and the Liberals was genuine enough, but it was the hatred of street women for a woman in possession of the rewards of virtue. Malice and envy inspired it; greed too, since in politics it's an ill wind that blows rogues no good. The women who surround such adventurers are commonly of the same type as themselves—unruly, scandalous, lascivious of luxury and pleasure, facile in emotion, and empty-headed, but with an audacity which depends more on quick wits than on courage, and with a native shrewdness. There is evidence that after her return to Paris Josephine renewed her acquaintance with Madame Fanny, Madame de Montesson, and other women who

had composed her circle in the early days of her marriage, and that she contrived very soon to reap advantages as the friend of demagogues and *sans-culottes*.

It is instructive to compare her attitude with that of her husband, whose patriotic zeal was making a good soldier of him on the frontier; with that of Madame de Stael, whose lights burned now a little less brightly; of the Queen (who strangely enough bore the name of Josephine) fortified, in her humiliation, by the steadfastness of her spirit; even of such women as Antoinette Danton and Lucille Desmoulins. The last mentioned has left an account of the scene in Danton's house on the morning of August 10.

"The tocsin was ringing on every side," she says. "We got up. Camille (Desmoulins) went off, assuring me that he would not expose himself. We had breakfast. Ten o'clock, eleven o'clock passed without our hearing a word. We picked up some of yesterday's papers, sat on a sofa in the drawing-room and tried to read. Madame Danton read me an article, and it was while she was doing this that I thought I heard the sound of cannon fire. She listens, hears it, grows pale and falls down in a faint. I took off her clothes. I could have fallen down on the spot myself, but I was held up by the necessity of helping her. . . . At one o'clock somebody came to tell us what had happened. Some of the Marseillais had been killed. But the stories were cruel. Camille arrived and told me the first head he had seen fall was that of Suleau. Robert had been in the city and had seen the awful spectacle of the massacre of the Swiss Guard. He came in after dinner and gave us a terrible account of what he had seen; and all day we heard talk of nothing else but what had happened. Next day, the 11th, we watched the funeral procession of the Marseillais. God! what a sight! How it wrung our hearts! Camille and I spent the night at Robert's house. I was terrified—I don't know why; it didn't seem that we should be safe at home. Next day, the 12th, when we got back I heard that Danton had been made a Minister."

Danton's inclusion in the Government indicated the weakness of the Liberals; it would be wrong, however, to suppose that the extreme revolutionaries felt no anxiety. They had captured the Commune of Paris and were dominant in the clubs. They had destroyed the monarchy. But they could not forget that, only a month ago, 20,000 worthy citizens of the capital had publicly testified horror at the violence offered to the King or that protests against violence had poured in from almost every department and city of France. A reaction might take place. What had they to rely on except the Parisian mob?

Moreover, Brunswick was about to advance on the city. How would the Liberals act in face of this threat? The King, prisoner though he was, might, in the event of successful invasion, become necessary again to his people as their shield from the horrors of siege and capitulation. Timid eyes were fixed on the Temple. Suppose the Liberals renewed their alliance with the throne. The Jacobins began to take measures for their security both at the front and in Paris.

Affairs at the front were exceedingly serious. Lafayette, since the first attack on the palace on June 20, had been considering the possibility of leading his army back to Paris to quell the extremists. When the news of August 10 reached him, this stiff, stupid, but principled man embodied in army orders a new oath of allegiance "to the nation, the law, and the King." That gesture of defiance shook the ground under the Jacobins' feet. If the army declared for the King, fraternized with Brunswick's troops, and descended on the capital, they were lost. Great, therefore, was their joy when they learned that Dumouriez had rejected Lafayette's order and placed his services wholly at their disposal. The Executive Committee of the Assembly, dominated by

Danton, lost not a moment in rewarding a succour so unexpected with the supreme command of the Northern Army. On August 16 Dumouriez, one-time Liberal and Constitutionalist, now soldier of the Commune, mounted into the saddle. Three days later Brunswick's troops crossed the French frontier.

The invasion approached with terrifying swiftness. On August 22 Longwy surrendered, and the same day the fortress of Verdun was invested. The enemy was but a few days' march from Paris. Panic fell on the city, and faint hearts forgave the King in anticipation of favours to come. But the Jacobins, having nothing to hope for in any direction except victory, displayed the courage of despair. The King and Queen were deprived of their handful of followers (August 19), and great batches of Royalists and priests were flung into prison. On the same day the Revolutionary Tribunal was set up by the Commune. Proclamations, issued by the Commune, warned the inhabitants of the capital that all able-bodied men must prepare to defend their country, while a pamphlet, also of official character, announced:

"Louis Capet's (the King's) great treason. Plot discovered to assassinate during the night of the 2nd of this month (September) all the good citizens of the capital, to be carried out by the aristocrats and recusant priests assisted by the robbers and criminals confined in the prisons of Paris.

"(*Signed*) CHARLES BOUSSEMART,
"*Unwhiskered Patriot.*"

The effect of this pamphlet on a populace already panic-stricken was explosive. To add to it, on August 27 the corpses of "patriots killed during the attack on the Tuileries were carried through the streets of Paris in a sarcophagus drawn by oxen and followed by the widows and orphans in white robes with black girdles."* A

* See note 25.

rumour began to run that the enemy was at the gate and bombardment about to begin. The fit men, it was whispered, were marching away; here was the opportunity of the Royalists, whether free or in prison. At noon on September 2 the alarm gun at the Pont-Neuf was fired, and a black flag was hoisted at the Hôtel de Ville. Thereupon a gang of assassins, 150 strong, many of whom were butchers and most of whom were small tradesmen, went to the prisons—La Force, l'Abbaye, the Carmelites, the Conciergerie, and others—and, after, in certain instances, a rough and ready trial, massacred upwards of 1,600 men and women in the presence of howling mobs. Those of the prisoners who were condemned were bludgeoned or cut down with swords as they stepped from the tribunals; those who were acquitted were embraced hysterically by the weeping, laughing, ravening spectators—a sufficient indication of the mental state of the populace. Among the victims was the Princesse de Lamballe, the Queen's friend, a woman whose excellent virtue was revered throughout France. Her head, on a pike, was carried to the Temple and thrust through the window of Marie Antoinette's prison.

That the "September massacres" were connived at by the Commune is certain; that some members of the Assembly were aware of what was afoot cannot be doubted, though no order from the Assembly to the butchers has ever been found. Danton was accused, so was Marat, so was Tallien. All denied the charge; all remain, to a greater or less degree, under suspicion. The massacres served the ends of the Jacobins by awakening living fear in every heart. The Liberals, protest as they might, and did, were fatally compromised, and could no longer look for mercy either from King or invader. If Brunswick reached Paris, massacre was certain to be

avenged by massacre. Brissot and Roland, whose names had actually been included in a first draft of the list of victims, shuddered; the Assembly shuddered; Paris; France herself. But there was no more talk of falling back on the good offices of King Louis.

In this atmosphere of panic without and within, the elections took place and the National Convention met for the first time. It contained 780 members, of whom 100 were Jacobins or Extremists, 180 Girondins, or Liberals, and 500 not closely identified with either party. The hall of assembly had a high bank of seats on the left, and of these the Jacobins took possession. The name "Mountain" was immediately bestowed on them. The rest of the house, except the benches occupied by the Girondists, was called the "Plain," sometimes the "Marsh."

It was September 20. Two hundred miles away Dumouriez's and Kellerman's guns were pounding out the victory of Valmy. The Mountaineers glared down at the Plain, undismayed by the shouts of "Septembrists" and "Assassins," which were hurled at them. The monarchy was declared abolished and a republic established. Then the Plain registered a solemn protest against the massacres and proposed that the Commune of Paris should be dissolved. Battle between Jacobins and Girondists was joined. Napoleon, a close observer of every phase of the Revolution, has left a description of these two parties.*

"The Jacobins," he said, "were distinguished for superior energy, the Girondists for superior talents. They were both partisans of a republican establishment. The Mountaineers were desirous of a republic for the purpose of destroying what was in existence before the Revolution, both men and things. The Girondists were animated by the infatuation of youthful

* See note 26.

feeling which presented at once Athens and Rome to their view and brought back the remembrance of sublime antiquity. . . .

"The first era of the Convention presents the struggle of the Girondists and Mountaineers; the Girondists prevailed at that time in consequence of their superior talents, eloquence, and their already acquired reputation. The presidents were nearly all Girondists; they charged the Mountain with the design of destroying the National Assembly and substituting in its place a Parisian Dictatorship; they also reproached it with the massacre of September. The Mountain, in its turn, charged them with wishing for a federative republic, like Switzerland, with being hostile to the capital, and with having, without cause, placed the Republic in a state of warfare with the whole of Europe.

"The Mountain had at its command the Jacobins of Paris and the greatest part of the popular societies of the Republic; the Commune of Paris, the sections, the Revolutionary Tribunal and the lower classes of the people of the capital were devoted to its interests. The Girondists possessed great influence over the departments in general and the enlightened part of the nation; their partisans were more numerous among the upper classes of society."

This careful estimate stands in no need of revision. The struggle which opened in September, 1793, was much more than a bid for power by men of extreme views and "superior energy." Paris was challenging France; the people were challenging democracy; the nation was challenging Europe. But greater issues even than these were in dispute. If, for the moment, the occasions and circumstances of the time are put on one side, the policy of the Jacobins is seen to be in its essentials the policy of Richelieu and Louis XIV.—namely, the maintenance of a strong Central Government, autocratic in temper and construction and aggressive in its relations with foreign Powers. In this sense both the Commune and the Revolutionary Tribunal were in the grand tradition, for their roots lay deep in the national

life, and their branches promised the fruit which, at all times of crisis, Frenchmen have desired. France, mistress of all parties and factions, returned in her hour of danger to her ancient policies, using such means to that end as lay ready to her hand.

The Revolution, in other words, as Mirabeau and Siéyès understood the term, had been suspended because the enemy was at the gate. What matter that the throne was fallen, since the guillotine stood in its place; that Louis fretted in the Temple, since Danton and Robespierre were able to override the rights of men in the name of security!

It is in the nature of politics that a paradox lurks behind every movement. The Jacobins had constituted themselves the lively architects of victory because victory promised them salvation. But its firstfruits were glory and release from fear, which are favourable to soldiers but unfavourable to the leaders of mobs. When the news of Dumouriez's victory at Valmy reached Paris, he and not the Mountaineers received the city's and the nation's homage—a tribute the more enthusiastically accorded because Lafayette, in despair at the downfall of monarchy, had given himself up to the Austrians. To their surprise and discomfiture, Danton and his friends saw the Girondists, who had been Dumouriez's friends and colleagues, win back a large part of their popularity.

Crows, too, began to come home to roost. The Parisians, aflame with pride that their sons had withstood the army of Frederick the Great, blushed for the September massacres. Respectable citizens looked askance at the mobs, and asked if the nation was to be governed by the Commune of Paris or by the Parliament? Roland, Brissot, and their companions of the Gironde began to feel themselves more secure and

turned with ardour to the task of applying their Liberal principles to the government of France. They had lost the inglorious King and gained instead the victorious army. But Louis remained the skeleton in their cupboard. What was to be done with him?

This party, of which Alexander de Beauharnais was a representative member, possessed a high courage, nobility of spirit, knowledge, and enthusiasm, and was free from the reproach of corruption. The figure of Roland, for example, stands in as sharp contrast to that of Danton or Marat on the one hand and of Tallien and Barras on the other, as does Madame Roland's zeal or Madame de Stael's clear intellect to the profligacy of Josephine and her circle. The Girondists, men and women, were fine; the Jacobins, fierce—a pack in which clean and ardent natures galloped with robbers, debauchees, and assassins. It was necessary to the pack to run on a hot scent; the prisoner in the Temple afforded them what they required. Day after day, with the *sans-culottes* cheering them in the public galleries of the Convention, they ravened for the King's blood.

The Girondists perceived the danger and recoiled from it. The King's trial would be their trial; since to condemn him would be to alienate millions of their supporters in the provinces; to pardon, to affront the armies he had betrayed. But to refuse trial was out of the question. Above all things, it was necessary to rebut the charge of being King's men.

Dumouriez's second victory of Jemappes on November 6 and his pursuit of the enemy across Belgium, while it bound fresh laurels on Liberal brows, did nothing to ease their fever. It was in vain that the Government challenged Europe and offered its help to all oppressed nations anxious to be free of tyrants; was it not nursing the greatest tyrant of them all in its bosom? What did

it fear? Had Louis Capet secrets up his sleeve about his late associates? The discovery in the palace of an iron chest containing some of the King's papers confirmed suspicion by proving that Mirabeau and others had been in close touch with royalty.

On December 3, 1792, the Gironde yielded, and it was decreed that the King should be tried by the whole Convention, and that a committee of twenty-one should frame the indictment. On December 11 Louis made his first appearance at the bar of the House. The trial began on Boxing Day, after Robespierre had protested that no trial was necessary. The King was charged with conspiring with the enemies of France and with treason, and, as indeed was inevitable, was pronounced guilty. It remained to decree his punishment. He was condemned to death by a majority of eleven votes (366 to 355). The Girondists declared themselves in favour of death, but proposed that the question of its infliction should be referred to the nation—a move dictated less by tenderness towards Louis than by a desire to shift responsibility from their own shoulders. Napoleon left on record his opinion about this move:*

> "It is difficult," he said, "to comprehend the reason of their (the Girondists) conduct during that crisis. If they wished to save the King they were at liberty to do so; they had only to vote for deportation, exile, or the adjournment of the question; but to sentence him to death and make his fate depend on the will of the people was in the highest degree absurd and impolitic. They seemed to be desirous that, after the extinction of the monarchy, France should be torn to pieces by civil war."

This criticism discloses the inevitable effect of the Girondin policy, but is not entirely fair to the authors of that policy, who, lacking a little the quality of states-

* See note 27.

manship—"the metaphysicians," as Napoleon himself allowed, "had too weighty a preponderance"—found themselves between the devil of Jacobinism and the deep sea of moderate opinion, which was certainly opposed to regicide.

On January 21, 1793, Louis was brought to the guillotine in the Place de la Revolution.* He travelled from the Temple in a closed carriage drawn by two horses. When the executioner Sanson ordered him to remove his neckwear he seemed on the point of refusing, but his confessor whispered that the Saviour of Mankind had been subjected to greater indignities. The King then submitted. An instant before the knife fell the voice of the priest was heard crying: "Son of St. Louis, ascend into Heaven." The mob fell on the King's body and stripped it; but handkerchiefs were dipped, by pious hands, in his blood.

The King's death, following Dumouriez's victories, alarmed Europe and had the immediate effect of bringing England and Holland and, later, Spain into the coalition against France.† But the Girondists, thanks largely to the good news from the frontiers, retained their ascendancy in the Convention. They had the propertied classes behind them, whereas the Jacobins relied on needy adventurers and mobs, whose support is always fitful and insecure. So long as the armies continued to win battles under their Liberal leaders it was improbable in the highest degree that the Mountain would achieve solid success. The Girondists addressed themselves to the making of the new Constitution with the enthusiasm they had shown in making the old, an enthusiasm which the still-birth of the latter had not abated. Noble images and generous ideas decorated their speech; they searched antiquity for parallels to

* See note 28. † See note 29.

the soaring flight of humanity which it was their fortune to direct.

These were lean days for the politicians of the Left, unless they happened to have a finger in the business world. We lose sight of Josephine. That she was up and doing in Paris, however, is probable, for her daughter confesses that she found difficulty in attending to her children's education, and that, in consequence, it was to their governess, Mademoiselle de Lannoy, that they looked for instruction.* The family had Alexander de Beauharnais' allowance to live on, but whether or not this was their sole income is unknown. Tallien, fiercest of Jacobins, continued to visit them.

On March 18, 1793, seven weeks after the execution of the King, Dumouriez's army suffered a heavy defeat at Neerwinden and began to retreat towards the frontiers of France. When the news reached Paris, fear, once again, became the dominant emotion. It was fanned by further disasters on the Rhine and by the revolt of the Royalist peasants of La Vendée. The need of a strong Central Government became paramount once more. Could the Girondists satisfy it? Liberalism is a luxury in the sense that it requires security for its growth and fructification. In the storms of March and April, 1793, the tree was shaken; when Dumouriez, aware that his defeat was likely to cost him his head, deserted to the Austrians on April 5, it was uprooted. Here was another flight to Varennes, a fresh betrayal of the moderate men by an ally on whose patriotism they had staked their reputations. Danton, whose offers of co-operation the Girondists had rejected,† returned instantly to his former methods, and with potent alchemy transmuted the panic of the capital into action. The tocsin rung by Marat summoned the sections. Hanriot,

* See note 30.

† See note 31.

at the head of the Army of Paris, surrounded the Convention. On May 31, and again on June 2, attacks, similar to those made upon the palace in the previous year, intimidated Parliament. The Girondists were overwhelmed and placed under arrest in their houses.

The fall of the Gironde, a direct result of the defeats, soon reacted on the armies. Officers belonging to the aristocracy and the middle class were suspect, since there was no guarantee that they might not follow Dumouriez's lead. The least failure was visited by dismissal, to be followed, often, by death. Alexander de Beauharnais was among those who found themselves mistrusted. In May, 1793, the Girondists, his friends and former colleagues, had appointed him to command the Army of the Rhine. He was now ordered by Danton to relieve Metz. He failed.

His failure coincided with the political failure of Danton. That great demagogue, who had leaped into the saddle at the beginning of June, after striking down the Girondists, had proved himself but an indifferent horseman. He had not succeeded in pulling the armies together nor known how to prevent the disruption of the nation. Lyons, Marseilles, Bordeaux, the great naval base of Toulon, and many other cities, had revolted against the Central Government. Enemies were attacking in the Alps and Pyrenees as well as on the northern frontiers. In this extremity the spirit of Richelieu was breathed once more on France. Early in July, a month after Danton's coming to power, the Committee of General Security,* which he had done so much to create, was reconditioned. He was left out.† Carnot and Robespierre gathered up the reins.

It was with these two that Alexander de Beauharnais had now to deal. They ordered him to resign, and on

* See note 32.

† See note 33.

August 21, 1793, he threw up his command and returned to Ferté Beauharnais, where he remained alone.*

The wheel of the Revolution had turned full circle. Parliament became completely subservient once more to the ruling power, which happened to be the guillotine instead of the throne, and that ruling power, from its seat in Paris, exerted supreme control of all the fighting forces, sent its pro-consuls into every province, and held over all citizens the powers of life and death. The middle class, backbone of liberty, was broken; vagabondage, always so nearly allied to aristocracy, wore the crown of St. Louis.

A policy of "Thorough" was outlined and executed. Carnot went to the front; Robespierre set about the business of crushing opposition at home. The armed ruffians of Paris were formed into a regiment and sent to the frontier. By the "Law of the Maximum" the price of food was fixed and speculation in corn made a capital offence.† Batches of swindling army contractors went to the Revolutionary Tribunal and thence to the guillotine. On September 17 it was decreed, in the "Law of Suspects," that suspicion ought to attach to every person who was of noble birth, or had held office before the Revolution, or had any connection with an *émigré*. Both Alexander de Beauharnais and Josephine were endangered by this law. Terror lashed the nation to action. By the end of August the siege of Dunkirk was raised. On October 15 and 16 was fought the Battle of Wattignies, whereby Coburg and his Austrians were forced to retreat from Maubeuge. That same month witnessed the surrender of Lyons and the massacre by Fouché‡ and Collot d'Herbois of those of its inhabitants, with their children, who had opposed the Central Government, the trial and execution of Marie

* See note 34. † See note 35. ‡ See note 36.

Antoinette, and the slaughter of twenty-one Girondist leaders. In November Madame Roland suffered. She was followed to the scaffold by the Duc d'Orleans, "Philippe Egalité," as he had called himself, the King's cousin who had voted for the King's death. In December, thanks largely to the genius of Captain-Commandant* Napoleone Buonaparte, the English and Spanish fleets were driven from the harbour of Toulon and the town forced to capitulate. Barras superintended the executions which followed.

Earlier in the autumn Marseilles and Bordeaux had made submission. Freron, a middle-aged dandy, kept the guillotine busy in the former city, and, in his leisure moments, began a flirtation with the thirteen-year-old Paolina Buonaparte,† who was living there with her mother. In the latter city Tallien massacred with zealous enthusiasm for a month or more, but spared the life of Jeanne de Fontenoy.‡ Thus was France whipped back into obedience to authority and at the same time raised again to her ancient state among the nations.

But though Robespierre had trodden Parliament under his heel, he had not rid himself of Paris. The hands which had dragged Louis XVI. from Versailles were ready, as he perceived, to destroy also the Committee of General Security—if it should prove refractory. It was necessary to do again what Louis XIV. had done—namely, reduce the capital to impotence that the nation might live. He betook himself in February, 1794, to solitude and meditation to prepare his plans: the pack of wolves led by Hebert, madmen foaming against civilization, mob-masters, jobbers and contractors grown sleek with the nation's blood, brigands, debauchees, abandoned themselves to a lively anxiety. There were hurried departures from the capital. Josephine, whose

* See note 37. † See note 38. ‡ See note 39.

position as the wife of a nobleman of the Gironde was dangerous in any case, took the natural but imprudent ſtep of sending her two children to the North of France to the Princess of Hohenzollern, then awaiting a chance to escape to England.* She herself retired to Madame Holſtein's country house at Croissy, near Chaton, between Paris and St. Germain-en-Laye, where she wrote to Hortense:

"My dearest Daughter,

"Your letter gave me great pleasure, my dear Hortense. I can well underſtand how you feel about being separated from your mamma, my child; but it is not for long, for I expect the Princess to return in the spring, when we shall again be together. . . . I love my darling little Hortense with all my heart. Embrace Eugène for me,

"Your loving mother,

"Josephine de Beauharnais."

Josephine did not inform Alexander, but he soon heard what she had done. It was tantamount to sending him to the guillotine, for if it was known that he was trying to get his children out of France it would be assumed that he intended to follow them. His elder brother François was an *émigré* fighting in Condé's army. He sent a courier to the Princess of Hohenzollern, ordering her to bring his children back without delay to Paris. He was obeyed; since Josephine was ſtill in the country, Eugène and Hortense were confided to the care of Madame Holſtein and Mademoiselle de Lannoy.

But the mischief was done. Alexander was now a marked man. His arreſt took place early in March, while Robespierre was ſtill meditating the fate of the Parisian scum; the order is dated March 2, 1794. Citizen Sirejean, an officer of the Committee of General Security, conducted the prisoner from Ferté Beauharnais

* See note 40.

to Paris, to the Luxembourg prison, but he was transferred on March 14 to the Carmelites.

He remained some time without being brought to trial. Robespierre, his period of meditation at an end,* had returned to the Convention. On March 15 the Dictator opened his attack on Hebert and his associates. A week later they were hurried to the guillotine. The tyranny of the Parisian mob was at an end. Danton, whose shrewd eyes had observed the growing disgust of the nation at Terrorist methods, proposed to Robespierre that they should join forces to put an end to them; but he found himself in the presence, not of a statesman, but of a fanatic. Robespierre, in his retreat, had received from his divinity the tables of a new law and had dedicated himself to the curious and callous task of "cleansing the Revolution." Danton was made aware that he was numbered among the unregenerate. Refusing to believe that he could be in any danger, he lingered in Paris. On April 5, exactly a year after the treachery of Dumouriez, who had been his friend, he was carried, singing, to the Place de la Revolution. Silent, moody crowds beheld his silhouette against the crimson and saffron of a great sunset as he mounted the steps of the guillotine. At his request, uttered with his last breath, Sanson showed his head to the people, who groaned at sight of it.

A few days later Robespierre made mention of the "purge of virtue" which he proposed to administer to France; very soon, encouraged by the applause of his intimates, he began to compound his physic for wider consumption and to look about him for suitable recipients. His glance fell on the circle of friends of which Josephine had been, until lately, so conspicuous a member, and which included Tallien, Barras, Fouché, Madame de

* See note 41.

Montesson, Madame Holstein, and others. This circle, as Robespierre knew very well, included the dregs of two administrations—women whom, for excellent reasons, the late King and Queen had refused to admit to their Court, and men who had grown rich by plundering the victims of the Revolutionary fury and even by robbing the nation itself. Robespierre began with the women, displaying in this a true understanding of the task he had set himself. Within a few days the majority of them were arrested and imprisoned. Josephine was arrested on April 19, 1794, and Madame Holstein and others at the same time.* On the following day the house in the Rue St. Dominique was searched by Robespierre's agents. Josephine was taken to the Carmelites, the same prison in which Alexander was lying, but that was probably an accident. There was some hope for her as the friend of Tallien and Barras, both of whom were still at liberty and both of whom remained members of the Convention; there was but little hope for her as the wife of the nobleman Alexander de Beauharnais.

The arrest of Josephine, indeed, belonged to an order of events different from the arrest of her husband. Whereas Alexander came to prison as an aristocrat, she came as an intimate of corrupt persons; such safety as existed for her resided evidently, not in association with her husband, but in the widest possible separation from him. And, in fact, they were confined in different parts of the prison. They met occasionally, but Josephine's companions were the women who had been arrested at the same time as herself—Jeanne de Fontenoy, Tallien's new friend, Madame Holstein, and Madame Montesson. Alexander was tried and sent to the guillotine; his wife did not even appear before the Revolutionary Tribunal.

* See note 42.

Her turn, doubtless, would have come. But it would have come in the company of the debauched Jacobins whom Robespierre aspired to destroy. There is a significant phrase in the anonymous letter denouncing Josephine, which was the immediate cause of her arrest, that seems to afford a key to her true position. It runs:

". . . former Countess de Beauharnais, who has many connections in Government circles."

The reference is evidently to the Government over which Robespierre presided—that is to say, to the Government of the Terror.

On the eve of his execution Alexander wrote a letter to his wife in the following terms:

"*4th Thermidor of the Second Year of the Republic one and indivisible* (*July* 22, 1794).

"All the evidence given at the so-called examinations which have been to-day inflicted on a number of prisoners shows that I am the victim of foul calumnies spread by certain aristocrats who pretend to be patriots and are now confined here. The knowledge that this infernal conspiracy* will not cease until it has brought me before the Revolutionary Tribunal deprives me of any hope of ever seeing thee again, dear friend, or of ever again embracing my children. I will not dwell on my regrets; my tender love for my children, the brotherly affection I have for thee, must convince thee of my feelings in this respect.

"I grieve also to leave a land I love, for which I would willingly have laid down my life a thousand times. Not only can I no longer serve France, but the manner of my death makes me appear an unworthy citizen. This torturing thought does not allow me to refrain from begging thee to clear my memory. Strive to rehabilitate it. Prove in the eyes of all men that a lifetime spent in serving our country's cause and in assuring the triumph of liberty and justice should outweigh the slanderous accusations of a few individuals, most of whom belong to a class we look on with suspicion. This task of thine must be

* See note 43.

postponed, for, in the midst of revolutionary temper, a great nation, seeking to pulverize its chains, must ever be watchful and more afraid of sparing a guilty man than of striking the innocent.

"I die not only with the serenity that allows us to think fondly of our dear ones, but also with the courage that animates a man who recognizes no master, whose conscience is clear, whose spirit is upright, whose most ardent wish is the prosperity of the Republic.

"Farewell, dear friend. Console thyself in our children. Console them by enlightening their minds, and, above all, by teaching them that, by their courage and patriotism, they may efface the memory of my execution and recall my services and my claims to our nation's gratitude. Farewell; thou knowest those I love: be their comforter, and by thy care prolong my life in their hearts. Farewell. I press thee and my dear children for the last time to my breast.

"ALEXANDER B——."

Alexander, therefore, was honest with himself to the last. His reference to the "brotherly love I have for thee" shows it. He died very bravely shortly after three o'clock the following day on the Place de la Nation in company with forty-four other persons.

How Josephine received the news of her husband's death is not known. A few details furnished by Hortense,* however, merit recounting. On the day after her mother's arrest, her brother Eugène:

"rushed off alone to see Tallien and tell him of our misfortune. I waited impatiently . . . but, alas! he, who would have been willing to help us, was already powerless to do so. Terror had frozen every heart."

She tells, further, how she and Eugène took presents to the prison for their parents and copied out the lists of articles included in the packages so that their parents

* See note 44.

might see their handwriting, communication by letter having been forbidden. She and Eugène remained at the house in the Rue St. Dominique, where Mademoiselle de Lannoy looked after them. They went every Sunday to visit the Princess of Hohenzollern. They did not lack money, because periodical advances reached them from a banker in Dunkirk named Emmery,* who did business for Josephine's mother. At this time Madame Tascher La Pagerie was the sole support of her daughter and grandchildren.

* See note 45.

# BOOK II
# BARRAS

## CHAPTER VII

## A PURGE OF VIRTUE

Josephine's arrest and the arrest of the other women of her circle were correctly interpreted by Tallien and Barras. They realized that the exhibition on their own persons of the purge of virtue was at hand. In Hortense's words, their hearts were frozen, which is not surprising when it is recalled that, at a word from Robespierre, they had just sent Danton to the guillotine. There was not a member of the circle who would not gladly have saved Danton could Danton's salvation have been accomplished without incurring danger. Danton had never aspired to a halo.

From April till the end of June there was no break in the frost of terror, and Robespierre was enabled to push on with his plans. He addressed the Convention, in most edifying language, on such topics as the need of the virtuous man for God and the assurance which the pure in heart must feel that their souls are immortal. These discourses caused the knees of Tallien and Barras and their friends to knock together after the manner of the knees of the unregenerate while listening to the preaching of a Puritan divine. It was not what Robespierre said about the fate of the political sheep which turned their bones to water, but what he left unsaid about that of the political goats.

For his public appearances Robespierre used to dress carefully. His hair was skilfully powdered, and not a speck of dust lay upon his sky-blue coat. The most fastidious did not find fault with the laundering of his

cravat or the cut of his nankeen breeches. The spectacle of this tidy fellow exhorting debauched men in his shrill, scolding voice till their bodies sweated with fear is not less curious than the language which the orator held. For example:

"Will the idea of his annihilation inspire purer and more exalted sentiments in a man than that of his immortality? Will it inspire him with more respect for his fellow-creatures and for himself, more devotedness to his country, more courage to defy tyranny, more contempt of death and of sensual pleasure?"

The Convention, caught up to the heights on which its dictator moved so easily, decreed that God existed and that the soul was indeed immortal, and nominated a day for the acknowledgment of the Supreme Being. Both Tallien and Barras took part in the festival.* They wore caps covered with feathers, and each carried in his hand a bunch of flowers, fruit, and ears of corn. Their uneasy eyes saw Robespierre set a torch to the figures of Atheism, Discord, and Selfishness. Robespierre's face was full of holy joy. When Atheism, Discord, and Selfishness had been burned, and the statue of Wisdom, rather blackened by smoke, it is true, had appeared in their stead, the high priest of the new faith preached to the people about the extirpation of vices:

"To-day let us give ourselves up to the transports of a pure enjoyment," he screeched, "to-morrow we will combat vice and tyranny anew."

To-morrow arrived. Robespierre let it be known that he had drawn up a list of the unregenerate. He asked for facilities in dealing with them, and his eye moved threateningly along the benches of the Parliament House

* See note 46.

on which Tallien and Barras were seated. With the knife at their throats these men dared at last to resist.*

Resistance discovered how many enemies a ruthless Puritanism can gather against it. Robespierre had been unlucky in his choice of a time for administering his purge; in these summer days of 1794 the French armies won battles and Paris was wholly set free of fear. In the first glow of relief virtuous men, already sick of slaughter, desired to see the guillotine put away. They joined with the unregenerate against the man who, on bright days as on dark, continued to feed that machine with its forty or fifty victims. The Convention refused to listen to any more sermons, and shouted the preacher down. Robespierre, shaking with fury and foaming at the mouth, was outlawed. On July 28 Barras, to whom the task of crushing the feeble opposition he offered had been entrusted by the Convention, took him prisoner. Sanson cut off his head the same evening.†

And now behold Tallien and Barras and their friends, reeking most of them with the blood of Frenchmen, making their bows to France as her saviours. Have they not destroyed the tyrant and brought the Reign of Terror to an end?

So great was the general relief that nobody troubled to dispute with them. Robespierre was dead. They might have any credit they chose. Tallien rushed to the Carmelites and liberated Jeanne de Fontenoy.‡ A few days later, on August 9, Josephine was liberated also.

The gloom which had oppressed these joyous spirits had by no means quenched them. Nothing now except money was lacking to their happiness. Money was on the way, for there was no longer any fear of a purge of virtue. Josephine and Madame Holstein returned home and threw open their doors. To their hospitable hearth

* See note 47. † See note 48. ‡ See note 49.

came the deliverers Tallien, Barras, Fouché, and the rest; there came, too, those gay fellows who had already set a new fashion by wearing their hair tied up behind *à la guillotine*. The circle gathered to its cheery parties the *Jeunesse Dorée,* the *Merveilleuses,* the *Incroyables*. There were guillotine balls. There were new fashions. There were even new pleasures.

Jeanne de Fontenoy was queen, not so much by right of her marriage to Tallien, which took place immediately, as by right of her beauty and her wealth. Nobody was quite so beautiful as she, nobody half so charming. Even if the story about the dagger she sent to Tallien from prison must be dismissed as a fable, who can doubt that the love he bore her quickened his courage? Jeanne had the credit of having helped to slay Robespierre. She had the more immediate credit of being a woman upon whom no man could look for the first time without a gasp. Fortune had given her Josephine for a companion in the Carmelites. She chose now to go about everywhere with Josephine. Everywhere that these two women went they were received with rapture.

Josephine's circle had achieved, indeed, a number of desirable ends by the luckiest of accidents. It had got rid of its taint of Terrorism through its share in Robespierre's downfall. By the same token it had acquired political power and social influence. The Royalists, emerging from their hiding-places, hurried to avail themselves of its shelter; the moderate Republicans did not absent themselves. All the stock-jobbers and contractors in France were ready to give it a share of their plunder for the security it offered themselves and for the distinction it conferred on their wives and daughters. At last Josephine had achieved her ambition of getting into—even of leading—the upper rank of society.

She remained without prejudices. Her circle was not

Royalist in sympathy, except in the presence of any threat of a return to the policy of Robespierre. It was not strongly Republican, except when members of the old aristocracy ventured to give themselves airs. True to itself it existed without fixed principles other than the advantage of its members. By a curious combination of circumstances, this was exactly the attitude of mind which at that hour the French people desired that their rulers should preserve. Everybody had had enough of principles.*

Josephine, however, was not without personal difficulties, and want of money was easily the first of them. In this new Paris, where everything was excessively dear and where the paper money was so debased in value that it seemed incapable of purchasing anything, the life of a woman of fashion was not easy. Before she had been out of prison many weeks she wrote to her mother† asking that lonely widow for an advance, and declaring that Madame Tascher La Pagerie must now look on herself as the mainstay of her daughter's support. The following is the text:

"I shall be happy if it reach you, with the assurance that your daughter and grandchildren are well. You are doubtless already aware of my misfortunes: that I have now been four months a widow and left with only my children to console me, and my dear mamma as my sole support. . . . My dearest wish is, some day, to be reunited to you. I live only in the hope that this desire may be realized. Adieu, my dear mamma; we all embrace you. Not a day passes that we do not speak of you and of our hope of seeing you in good time.

"Farewell.

"From your daughter,
who loves you with all her heart,
"La Pagerie, *veuve* Beauharnais."

* See note 50.

† See note 51.

There were other sources of revenue. Barras had fallen in love with Josephine, and the young General Hoche, who had also been imprisoned in the Carmelites, was sufficiently attentive to be laid under contribution.* Barras' sources of income were the stock-jobbers and army contractors, all of whom paid well for the right to swindle the nation. But Josephine found that no one is so reluctant to part with money as a spendthrift. She complained so bitterly of her poverty that even Barras on his own showing began to be afraid of her. Nevertheless, he continued to desire her company. She went down occasionally to Croissy, to Madame Holstein's country house, and Barras followed her. He used to come to lunch with his suite and stay late, and he continued to do this after he became one of the Directors.

It was not a savoury company. Barras† was completely hedged round by the leaders of the most crapulous anarchy, the most debased aristocrats, low women, bankrupt stockbrokers, mistresses, and minions of all sorts.

Pasquier's description of what he saw at Croissy merits reproduction.‡

"We had as a neighbour," he wrote, "Madame de Beauharnais, whose high fortunes we were far from foreseeing. Her house adjoins ours. . . . At early morn we were in the habit of seeing the arrival of baskets full of provisions, shortly afterwards followed by the arrival of mounted gendarmes patrolling the road from Nanterre to Croissy, for the young Director most frequently came on horseback.

"The house of Madame de Beauharnais displayed, as is somewhat the fashion with creoles, a kind of showy luxury. Side by side with the superfluous, there was oftentimes a lack of the most necessary articles. Poultry, game, and rare fruits would be piled up in the kitchen (we were then passing through a time when provisions were very scarce) while, on the other hand, there were not enough saucepans, glasses, or

* See note 52. † See note 53. ‡ See note 54.

plates, and she borrowed these from our poor little household. . . . Our intercourse was limited to these neighbourly acts, although Madame Pasquier had met Madame Beauharnais before the Revolution. . . .

"France resembled a fortified city after a long siege, when there is a lack of everything at one and the same time. The products of the soil and groceries brought their weight in gold. Even soap was sold at exorbitant prices, and then part of it was clay. The most serious and hardest privation to endure was that of bread. One must have suffered from it in order to conceive the patience required of the unfortunate beings who nevertheless endured it with admirable fortitude."

In Paris, as at Croissy, Josephine and her women friends lived on the politicians who, in their turn, lived on the stock-jobbers and army contractors. She was Barras' mistress, but not exclusively. She took money from anybody who would give it and borrowed from anybody who would lend. Debts accumulated. On January 1, 1795, she wrote to her mother:

"My dearest Mother,

"At last, through the kindness of our good friend Emmery, I have opportunity of communicating with you, and I embrace it eagerly. I hope this message from your poor Yeyette (or "Geyette") and her children will reach you; for she has great need of your sympathy; her heart yearns for that of which she has been so long deprived. You must be aware by this time of the misfortunes which have befallen me, and must know that I have no other recourse than you for the means of my existence. . . . I am not only widowed, but I am deprived of my husband's property; and without the assistance of our good friends Emmery and his partners I do not know how I should have maintained myself alive. . . . I know too well your regard for my honour to have the least doubt that you will supply me with the means of subsistence and to requite my indebtedness to them. . . . I shall have to depend on your bounty entirely and must beg that you make me a remittance at least every three or four months. . . . The children are well; they love you and send you their ten-

dereſt greetings, in which I join. We are looking forward to the time when we shall be once more reunited, never more to be separated; and this is the dearest wish of your poor Yeyette.

"Farewell. I again embrace you with all my heart and soul.

"La Pagerie, *veuve* Beauharnais."

Madame Tascher La Pagerie was living alone on the plantation and contending with very great difficulties. Some sympathy, nevertheless, may be spared to Josephine. Her conſtant companion, Jeanne de Fontenoy, the new Madame Tallien, was not only eleven years younger and exquisitely beautiful, but had a rich father, the banker Cabarrus. Everybody knew how Tallien had snatched his wife from the guillotine at Bordeaux. Romance belonged to Jeanne; Josephine poſſeſſed nothing but her graceful figure, her native shrewdness and her tears.

She employed her talents with discretion. A Royaliſt publication of the period* states that:

"The fair sex in France, naturally coquettes, vain, dashing, and bold, were now much more inclined towards the naked than the clothed syſtem. Nakedness, absolute nakedness and nothing but nakedness was therefore seen at the playhouses, at the opera, at the concerts, at the routs and in public walks, as well as in private assemblies. Where one lady left off a fichu, another laid aside a petticoat. When one uncovered her arms another exposed her legs. . . . Madame Beauharnais, the gay widow of the guillotined Viscount, put on flesh-coloured satin pantaloons under a clear muslin gown, leaving off all petticoats, but at the same time lowering the sleeves of her gown to her elbows. Her long elaſtic gloves of Grenoble (silk) combined to conceal even her clumsy fingers. Madame Tallien, who prided herself on the beauty of her arms, in her turn wore gowns without sleeves, and to diſtract the notice of admirers from the flesh-coloured pantaloons of her rival affixed borders of large and open Brussels lace to her undergarments."

* See note 55.

Such a warfare costs money, but often wins it too. In April, 1795, Josephine, thanks to her friends, was appointed guardian to her children and could proceed to the task of recovering Alexander's estates with the assurance that, if she succeeded, the revenue would pass into her own hands. Both Barras and Tallien were invaluable in the prosecution of this pious task. It says a great deal for her powers of persuasion that, in spite of the violent political upheavals which filled the months of April and May and extended into the autumn, she was in possession of Ferté Beauharnais before the end of August. She obtained, too, a carriage and pair of black horses to replace carriages left by her husband at army headquarters at Strasbourg. Hoche had taken Eugène campaigning with him. She now recalled the boy and sent him back to school. Hortense, at the same time, went to Madame Campan's school.

Her friends, meanwhile, had suffered no break in their run of good luck. They resisted with energy the two attempts which Robespierre's old associates made to overwhelm them, and on each of these occasions improved their position. The Royalists were helpful at these junctures. But as the autumn of 1795 approached, the Royalists, in their turn, began to threaten. Barras grew seriously alarmed. Would it be necessary to call in Robespierre's associates to defeat the Royalists?

There was no insuperable objection to that course, for the existing Government had always boasted of its ability to hold the balance between the extremes represented by the guillotine on the one hand and the throne on the other. But Barras and his friends had sent Robespierre to the scaffold and could not, therefore, without anxiety entrust their fate to his bereaved followers. When October began, their fears quickened to terror. The troops stationed round Paris were

shaky; they might at any moment declare for the King.

The Convention was in panic, and, remembering, no doubt, the circumstances of the arrest of Robespierre, thrust upon Barras the office of Commander-in-Chief. He assumed it, swearing to defend the Convention against the Royalist mob at all costs. The assistance of the Robespierrists was solicited and obtained. But that was not enough. Barras knew something of soldiering, but he also knew his limitations. The effective command must be in other hands. But whose? There was little time for reflection. Within a few hours Barras had pitched upon Napoleone Buonaparte, one of the numerous and needy unemployed generals of the Republic. They had met at the siege of Toulon, and Barras had been impressed. It was a pity that Buonaparte was rather a Robespierrist, but no matter. "He is a little Corsican officer," Barras explained to his colleagues, "who will not stand upon ceremony."*

* See note 56.

## CHAPTER VIII

## GENERAL BUONAPARTE

On the following day, October 5, 1795, General Buonaparte alarmed the mob of Paris by firing cannon at it. That was a new experience for people accustomed to look upon themselves as masters and to be told that whatever they did was right. The mob retired, speeded by a final "whiff of grapeshot," to reconsider its position, and the hopes of the Royalists sank. A few days later the Convention was dissolved and the Directory established. Barras was appointed one of the five Directors who were to govern France. Josephine's immediate anxiety was at an end.

She was not released, however, from anxiety about the future. In spite of the restoration to her of Alexander's estates, she remained heavily in debt. Towards the end of October her mother's man of business, Emmery, of Dunkirk, seems to have felt doubt about making any further advances, for he advised her to go herself to Hamburg, where was established the banking-house through which her remittances were received. She arrived in Hamburg at the end of October and saw the banker Mathiessen. The result of the interview was a letter to her mother, dated October 30, 1795, from Hamburg, in which she announced:

"You will receive, then, my dear mamma, three bills of exchange, drawn upon you from Hamburg, October 25, at three months' sight, in my favour, in three sums as follows: £400, £350 and £250 sterling. . . . I need not remind you how necessary it is to honour these drafts, since they are for the

reimbursement of the friends who have so generously assisted me and my children.

"Why do you hesitate to rejoin us, my dear mamma? Think how much trouble and vexation your coming would save your dear Yeyette, who lives only in the expectation of soon seeing you and of realizing the hopes she has so long and so ardently cherished. It is also the advice of our friends to convert everything possible to funds and come to us as soon as agreeable, to rejoin your own children who love you and will ever cherish you. Receive this assurance of tenderest regard, my good and beloved mamma.

"La Pagerie, *veuve* Beauharnais.

"My father-in-law and aunts are well.* Give my tenderest regards to all my friends; remembrance to the domestics; embrace my old nurse for me."

Madame Tascher La Pagerie's feelings on receiving this letter are not known, but she did not sell her estates. The British blockade made a voyage to France at that time no very tempting prospect.

"Madame de Beauharnais was not well off," says Madame de Rémusat,† "and her love of dress and luxury made her dependent upon those who would help her to satisfy her passion." The £1,000 she had obtained at Hamburg eased matters for the moment. Life was gayer than ever, for General Buonaparte's‡ victory over the Royalists had removed every fear. But Barras could no longer be depended on. It was all too evident that he was falling in love with Madame Tallien and that Madame Tallien would not reject him. Where was the money to come from now? Josephine's anxious gaze searched the faces of friends and acquaintances; it lingered on the sharp and sallow features of General Buonaparte. Why not? The little General had just been rewarded by Barras with the Command of the Army of

* See note 57. † See note 58. ‡ See note 59.

the Interior, a good salary, a house in the Rue des Capucines, and a carriage. She sent her son Eugène to Buonaparte to ask for his father's sword, called on him herself, and contrived to get him to call on her.* She paid him a few compliments, and observed that he took them quite seriously. When they got to know one another a little better, he confided to her that, if he had the power, he would turn his cannon next against the drawing-rooms of Paris.

Buonaparte fixed his grey eyes on her face when he spoke to her. There was something about this Corsican which recalled Robespierre. On the other hand, he seemed to be falling in love with her. The moment was not one in which she could afford to pick and choose. She let him tell her how, if his opportunity ever came, he would change the face of Paris till that face no longer shocked his notions of decency.

On January 21, 1796, Barras gave a dinner-party at the Luxembourg to celebrate the happy anniversary of the execution of Louis XVI. Josephine took Eugène and Hortense with her.†

"My mother," says Hortense, "told us that she was dining with the Director Barras and that she would take us with her. 'What!' I cried impetuously, 'you actually associate with such people? Have you forgotten our family misfortunes?' 'My child,' she answered with the angelic gentleness which never left her, 'you must remember that, since your father's death, I have done nothing but try to save the remains of his fortune that we feared would be lost. Must I not be grateful to those who have helped and protected me?'

"I recognized that I was wrong. I begged my mother's pardon and went with her to the Directory, established in the Palace of the Luxembourg. Barras had invited a number of guests, of whom Tallien and his wife were the only ones I knew. At dinner I found myself placed between my mother

* See note 60.

† See note 61.

and a general, who, in order to talk to her, kept leaning forward so often and with so much vivacity that he wearied me and obliged me to lean back. Thus, in spite of myself, I looked attentively at his face, which was handsome and very expressive, but remarkably pale. He spoke ardently and seemed to devote all his attention to my mother. It was General Buonaparte. . . ."

On February 9, 1796, Josephine's engagement to the General was announced. She received a letter from him a few days later as follows:*

"*Seven o'clock in the morning.*†

"My waking thoughts are all of you. Your portrait and the remembrance of last night's delirium have robbed my senses of repose. Sweet and incomparable Josephine, what an extraordinary influence you have over my heart. Are you vexed? Do I see you sad? Are you ill at ease? My soul is broken with grief and there is no rest for your lover.

"But is there more for me when, delivering ourselves up to the deep feelings which master me, I breathe out upon your lips, upon your heart, a flame which burns me up? Ah! it was this past night I realized that your portrait was not you.

"You start at noon. I shall see you in three hours. Meanwhile, *mio dolce amor,* accept a thousand kisses, but give me none, for they fire my blood.

"N. B.

"A Madame Beauharnais."

He wrote very bad French—"Un millier de baise" for "a thousand kisses." But what of that?

* See note 62.

† See note 63.

## CHAPTER IX

## AN ODD FELLOW

On February 23, 1796, General Bonaparte was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Italy. This appointment was strictly upon merit and had no relation to his forthcoming marriage with Josephine, other than the fact that, Carnot having proposed his name for the post, Barras had seconded it. Barras would have done so in any case, because of the help which the General had given against the Royalists.

The post was not an attractive one, for the Army of Italy had long been without regular pay. It had become disorganized and lived by looting. Bonaparte, however, had served, formerly, with it and was known to have drawn up a plan of campaign for the invasion of Lombardy. Josephine was not elated by the news of her future husband's promotion.* She recalled, no doubt, that Alexander had been Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the Rhine, a more important post. What advantage had come to anybody from that appointment?

Bonaparte was lacking in all those social accomplishments which Josephine was used to value. His manners were uncouth, his person insignificant, his speech that of a foreigner. But she troubled herself to humour him, for he described her as "a true patriot." That term, in his mouth, meant an austere Republican. He would not have employed it if he had not taken occasion to open his mind on political questions and if he had not found Josephine ready to agree with him. During the

* See note 64.

days of their engagement Josephine was, in fact, compelled to listen to many a sermon.

She made careful inquiries about him and asked all her friends to advise her what to do, though she must have known what advice they would give. Barras was strongly in favour of the marriage, so were the Marquis and Madame Renaudin, whose own marriage at long last was about to take place. All these had first-hand experience of Josephine's powers as a borrower. The only note of opposition came from her lawyer, M. Requideau, who made some unfavourable comments in Bonaparte's presence, and was promptly told, by Bonaparte, that he was an honest man. And so, on March 9, 1796, at ten o'clock at night, the marriage took place before the Mayor of the Section, who had gone to sleep in the bride's presence while waiting for the bridegroom and had to be aroused by that late-comer. It was a quiet affair. Josephine's witnesses were Tallien and a lawyer named Calmelet; Napoleon's his aide-de-camp and Barras. Josephine had already told her bridegroom that she was the youngest daughter of her parents, and therefore boldly stated her age as twenty-eight, whereas it was nearly thirty-three.* Bonaparte added two years to his age, which was twenty-six. After the ceremony the bride and bridegroom returned in Josephine's carriage behind the black horses to No. 6, Rue Chantereine, which she had leased from the wife of Talma, the actor, during her liaison with Barras, and at which Madame Fanny had stayed with her. The house was reached from the street by a passage. It was self-contained and consisted of two floors and a basement. There were stone lions guarding the steps which led into the dining-room. That room was flanked on either side by smaller apartments; directly above it was

* See note 65.

Josephine's bedroom, which was entirely lined by mirrors. The garden and stables were behind. In addition to her coachman, Josephine kept a chef and a housemaid.* On his wedding night Bonaparte found a rival awaiting him in his wife's bed—namely, her lap-dog, Fortuné. He suggested that the animal might be removed, but Josephine would not consent. So he got into bed. Fortuné at once bit him in the leg.† The next day the couple went to St. Germain to see the bride's children. Eugène was in a college conducted by an Irishman named Patrick MacDermott, and Hortense remained at Madame Campan's school. What the boy thought is not on record; the girl was frankly hostile.‡ The following morning, March 11, a Friday, Bonaparte left for Italy.

His departure was a great relief to his wife. She could scarcely hide the joy with which she saw the last of him. It was improbable in the highest degree that he would accomplish anything with the ragamuffins, half fed and scarcely even half clothed, who awaited him at Nice. He would soon be recalled. And what then? Could she doubt that her true interest, and, for that matter, his interest also, lay in cultivating her friends in Paris, where Barras ruled over the destinies of all the generals and all the armies? Josephine used the money which Bonaparte had given her to pay her way in society. From her point of view that was the only sound investment.

But the post brought her astonishing letters.

"Chanceaux Post House,
"*March* 14, 1796.

"I wrote you at Chatillon§ and sent you a power of attorney to enable you to receive various sums of money in course of

* See note 66.
† See note 67.
‡ See note 68.
§ See note 69.

remittance to me. Every moment separates me farther from you, my beloved, and every moment I have less energy to exist so far from you. You are the constant object of my thoughts; I exhaust my imagination in thinking of what you are doing. If I see you unhappy, my heart is torn and my grief grows greater. If you are gay and lively among your friends—male and female—I reproach you with having so soon forgotten the sorrowful separation three days ago; in that case you must be fickle and not to be stirred by deep emotions. So, you see, I am not easy to satisfy; but, my dear, I have quite different sensations when I fear that your health may be affected or that you have cause to be annoyed; then I regret the haste with which I was separated from my darling.

"I feel, in fact, that your natural kindness of heart exists no longer for me, and it is only when I am quite sure you are not vexed that I am satisfied. If I were asked how I slept I feel that, before replying, I should have to get a message to tell me that you had had a good night. The ailments, the passions of men, influence me only when I imagine that they may reach you, my dear. May my good genius, which has always preserved me in the midst of great dangers, surround you, enfold you, while I will face my fate unguarded. Ah! be not gay, but a trifle melancholy; and especially may your soul be free from worries as your body from illness; you know what our good Ossian says on the subject. Write me, dear, and at full length, and accept the thousand and one kisses of your most devoted and faithful friend."

In spite of the benedictory style, Josephine detected her husband's uneasiness. He had actually addressed the letter to the "Citoyenne Beauharnais," forgetful that he had given her his name. She felt the greatest difficulty in knowing what to write to him. She had already written to his mother at Marseilles announcing her marriage. He had taken the letter with him. The reply, dated April 1, duly arrived.

"I have received your letter, madame," wrote the widow Buonaparte (whom Napoleon sometimes called "Mama

Letizia "),* "which could only strengthen the opinion I had formed of you. My son has informed me of his happy union, and from that moment you possess my esteem and approval. Nothing is wanting to my happiness save the satisfaction of seeing you. Be assured that I feel for you all of a mother's tenderness and that I love you as much as my own children. My son gives me the hope, and your letter confirms me in it, that you will pass through Marseilles in going to join him. I rejoice, madame, in the pleasure that your stay here will afford me. My daughters join with me in hoping that you will hasten the happy moment of your journey. In the meantime be assured that my children, following my example, have vowed for you the same friendship and tenderness that they feel for their brother.

"Believe, madame, in the attachment and affection of

"Letitia Buonaparte (*Mère*)."

This copybook epistle, in correct French, had not certainly been written by Mama Letizia, because that worthy woman, as her son freely allowed, had not mastered the French language. No doubt her sons and daughters had composed it among them, on the instructions of their brother. Josephine forgot it as quickly as possible. She got a second letter from Napoleon's eldest brother, Giuseppe, or Joseph, as he now called himself, which also bore traces of fraternal dictation.

"Madame" (it ran),

"I have learned with the warmest interest of your marriage to my brother. The friendship which unites me to him does not permit me to be insensible to the happiness which he will find with you. Of this I am as well persuaded as he himself from the opinion which I have formed of you. Accept, I beg, the assurance of the fraternal feelings with which I sign myself,

"Your brother-in-law,

"Joseph."

* See note 70.

This letter, and that of Mama Letizia, put the marriage on a conventional footing—since the consent of neither had been asked for before it took place.*

The spate of letters from Bonaparte himself continued. His passion seemed to give him no rest. But he was easily aroused to suspicion. Once, when she mentioned casually that she had broken off a letter to him to go into the country, he rebuked her. Had he heard of Croissy?

"I am not satisfied with your last letter; it is cold as friendship," he wrote. "I have not found that fire which kindles your looks and which I have sometimes fancied I found there. . . .

"You do not speak of your wretched indigestion—I hate it."

She took the precaution of not writing so often, but that resolution broke down after a week. For Bonaparte began to win battles. She heard with genuine surprise that he had covered himself with glory. His brother Giuseppe arrived in Paris from the front and brought her a new letter, written on April 24, after the Battle of Montenotte (April 12), where he had defeated the Austrians, Millesimo (April 14), where he had routed and separated the Austrian and Sardinian armies, and Mondovi (April 22), where he had finally put the forces of the King of Sardinia out of action. It ran:

"*Mio dolce amor,* my brother (Giuseppe) will give you this letter.

"I have for him the most lively affection. I trust he will obtain yours; he merits it. Nature has endowed him with a gentle, even, and unalterably good disposition; he is made up of good qualities. I have written Barras to appoint him Consul in some Italian port. He wishes to live with his little wife far from the great whirlwind and from great events. I recommend him to you.

* See note 71.

"I have received your letters of (April) the 5th and 10th. You have been several days without writing me. What *are* you doing then? Yes, my kind, kind love, I am not jealous, but sometimes uneasy. Come soon. I warn you if you delay you will find me ill; fatigue and your absence are too much for me at the same time.

"Your letters make up my daily pleasure, and my happy days are not often. Junot brings twenty-two flags to Paris. You must return with him, do you understand? Be ready, if you don't mind. Should he not come, woe without remedy; should he come back to me alone, grief without consolation, constant anxiety. My dear, he will see you, he will breathe on your temples; perhaps you will accord him the unique and priceless favour of kissing your cheek, and I, I shall be alone and very far away; but you are about to come, are you not? You will soon be beside me, on my breast, in my arms, mouth to mouth. Take wings. Come quickly. But travel gently. The way is long, bad, fatiguing. If you should be overturned, or be taken ill, if fatigue—go gently, my beloved.

"I have received a letter from Hortense. She is entirely lovable. I am going to write to her. I love her much and I will soon send her the perfumes that she wants.

"N. B."

"I know not if you want money, for you never speak to me of business. If you do, will you ask my brother for it—he has 200 louis of mine. If you want a place for anyone you can send him; I will give him one. . . ."

She wept with vexation that was not occasioned solely by her dislike of leaving home. Bonaparte was asking her to risk her position in Parisian society, and these victories of his were most likely only a flash in the pan. She wrote and told him that she was in the family way.

He did not answer her letter for some weeks, but the newspapers and the crowds in the street outside her house answered it for him. New victories were announced every day. Either Bonaparte was taking incredible

numbers of prisoners and guns and flags, or else he was making a triumphal entry into some great Italian city. If she showed herself at the window the crowd bellowed out the name that Paris had bestowed on her—"Our Lady of Victories." Josephine thought of escaping from all this attention to Croissy, but she found this was scarcely possible. Paris was standing guard over her.

She forgot that she had said she was pregnant, and began to go about. How attentive everybody had become! She attracted more attention now than Madame Tallien.* But her shrewd mind tunnelled beneath the surface of things. She did not fail to notice that the hubbub about her husband was causing Barras and his friends a little uneasiness. They had not cut off Robespierre's head to make Bonaparte king. It was just as well, she concluded, that she had not gone to Italy.

At last Bonaparte's reply to her letter arrived. It was so long and so badly written that she could scarcely read it. A sceptical mind revealed itself in the transports of love and sympathy which were exhibited.

"My life is a perpetual nightmare, a presentiment of ill oppresses me.† I see you no longer. I have lost more than life, more than happiness, more than my rest. I am almost without hope.

"I hasten to send a courier to you. He will stay only four hours in Paris and then bring me your reply. Write me ten pages. That alone can console me a little. You are ill, you love me. I have made you unhappy, you are in delicate health and I do not see you! And that thought overwhelms me.

"I have done you so much wrong that I know not how to atone for it; I accuse you of staying in Paris and you were ill there. Forgive me, my dear; the love with which you have inspired me has bereft me of reason. I shall never find it again. It is an ill for which there is no cure. My presentiments are so ominous that I would confine myself merely to seeing you, to

* See note 72. † See note 73.

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pressing you for two hours to my heart—and then dying with you.

"Who looks after you? I expect you have sent for Hortense. I love that sweet child a thousand times more when I think she can console you a little, though for me there is neither consolation nor repose nor hope until the courier that I have sent comes back and until in a long letter you explain to me what is the nature of your illness and to what extent it is serious; if it be dangerous, I warn you, I start at once for Paris. My coming shall be determined by (rendered by Hall "coincide with") your illness. I have always been fortunate; never has destiny resisted my will, and to-day I am hurt in what touches me to the quick (*uniquement*). Josephine, how can you remain so long without writing to me? Your last laconic letter is dated May 22. It is, too, a distressing one for me, but I always keep it in my pocket; your portrait and letters are perpetually before my eyes.

"I am nothing without you. I scarcely imagine how I existed without knowing you. Ah! Josephine, had you known my heart would you have waited from May 18 to June 4 before starting? Would you have given an ear to perfidious friends who are perhaps desirous of keeping you away from me? I openly avow it to everyone. I hate everybody who is near you. I expected you to set out on May 24 and arrive on June 3.

"Josephine, if you love me, if you realize how everything depends on your health, take care of yourself. I dare not tell you not to undertake so long a journey, and that, too, in the hot weather. At least, if you are fit to make it, come by short stages; write me at every sleeping place and despatch your letters in advance.

"All my thoughts are concentrated in your boudoir, in your bed, on your heart. Your illness! That is what occupies me night and day. Without appetite, without sleep, without care for my friends, for glory, for fatherland, you, you alone—the rest of the world exists no more for me than if it were annihilated. I value honour since you value it, I value victory since it pleases you; but for that I should leave everything to fling myself at your feet.

"Sometimes I tell myself that I alarm myself unnecessarily, that even now she is better, that she is starting, has started, is

perhaps already at Lyons. Vain fancies! You are in bed, suffering, more beautiful, more interesting, more lovable. You are pale and your eyes are more languishing, but when will you be cured? If one of us ought to be ill, it is I—more robust, more courageous; I should support illness more easily. Destiny is cruel, it strikes at me through you.

"What consoles me sometimes is to think that it is in the power of destiny to make you ill, but in the power of no one to make me survive you.

"In your letter, dear, be sure and tell me that you are convinced that I love you more than it is possible to imagine; that you are persuaded that all my moments are consecrated to you; that to think of any other woman has never entered my head—they are all, in my eyes, without grace, wit or beauty; that you, you alone, such as I see you, such as you are, can please me and absorb all the faculties of my mind; that you have traversed its whole extent; that my heart has no recess into which you have not seen, no thoughts which are not subordinate to yours; that my strength, my powers, my spirit are all yours; that my soul is in your body; and that the day on which you change or cease to live will be my death-day; that Nature, that earth is beautiful only because you dwell therein. If you do not believe all this, if your soul is not convinced, penetrated by it, you grieve me, you do not love me—there is a magnetic fluid between people who love one another—you know perfectly well that I could not bear a rival, much less go on enduring him. To tear out his heart and to see him would be for me one and the same thing, and then if I were to raise my hands against your sacred person—no, I should never dare to do it, but I would quit a life in which the most virtuous of women had deceived me.

"But I am sure and proud of your love; misfortunes are the trials which reveal to each, mutually, the whole force of our passion. A child as charming as its mamma will soon see the daylight and will pass many years in your arms. Hapless me! I would be happy with one day. A thousand kisses on your eyes, your lips, your tongue, your heart. Most charming of your sex, what is your power over me? I am very ill of your illness; I have still a burning fever. Do not keep the courier more than six hours, and let him return at once to bring me the longed for letter of my beloved.

"Do you remember my dream in which I was your boots, your dress, and in which I made you come bodily into my heart? Why has not Nature arranged matters in this way? She has much to accomplish yet.

"N. B.

"A La Citoyenne Bonaparte."

*"Il est drole, Bonaparte!"* remarked Josephine. Another letter* soon followed.

"Bologna,
"*June* 20, 1796.

"You were to have left Paris on the 5th (of June). You were to have left on the 11th. You had not left on the 12th. My soul had been filled with joy. It is filled with pain. All the couriers arrive without bringing me letters from you. When you write me a few words your style is never that expressing a deep feeling. You loved me through a light caprice; you already feel how ridiculous it would be were it to remain in your heart. It appears to me that you have made a choice and that you know to whom to address yourself in order to replace me. I wish you happiness—if frivolity can attain it, not to say perfidy. You have never loved.

"I had hastened my operations. I calculated that you would be at Milan on the 13th and you are still in Paris. I take counsel within my own soul. I suppress a sentiment which is unworthy of me and, if glory does not suffice for my happiness, it forms an element of death and immortality. As for you, may my memory not be odious to you. It is my misfortune to have known you little; yours to have judged me like the men who surround you.

"My heart never felt anything mediocre; it denied itself love. You inspired it with a boundless passion—a frenzy which degraded it. The thought of you was in my soul, above that of the entire world. To me, your caprice was a sacred law—to be able to see you was a supreme joy. You are beautiful, graceful. Your sweet and heavenly soul is painted on your face. I adore everything in you. Had you been more naïve and younger I should have loved you less. Everything pleased me—even the

* See note 74.

memory of your errors, and of the afflicting scene which took place two weeks before our marriage.* Virtue to me was everything that you did. Honour was that which pleased you. Glory could only attract my heart because it was agreeable to you and flattered your conceit. Your portrait was always on my heart. Never a day without seeing it, never an hour without looking at it and covering it with kisses. You, you left my portrait six months† without taking it from its hiding-place. Nothing escaped me. If I went on living I should love only you, and of all rôles that is the only one I cannot fill.

"Josephine, you would have brought happiness to a man less fantastic than myself. I warn you that you have made me miserable. Cruel one, why have you led me to place hope in a feeling that you do not possess? But reproaches are unworthy of me. I have never believed in happiness. Every day death gallops around me. Is life worth making so much fuss about?

"Adieu, Josephine. Remain in Paris. Do not write me any more. But at least respect my hearth. A thousand daggers tear my soul; do not drive them in any further. Adieu, my happiness, my love, everything that existed for me on earth!

"BONAPARTE."

Josephine, accustomed to read love-letters with the sophisticated detachment of a business man reading the prospectus of a new company, owned herself a little uneasy. Bonaparte was evidently a tougher proposition than she had suspected or bargained for. Her instinct to escape trouble made her send him a short letter—three lines—and follow it up, a week later, with another of the same length. In this period he completed the conquest of Italy and received the submission of the Pope. His next letter was dated June 26, 1796.

"You ought," he wrote, "to have started on May 22.‡ Being good-natured, I waited till June 1, as if a pretty woman would give up her habits, her friends, both Madame Tallien and a dinner with Barras, and the acting of a new play, and Fortuné

* See note 75. † See note 76. ‡ See note 77.

—yes, Fortuné whom you love much more than your husband, for whom you have only a little of the liking and a share of the easy benevolence with which your heart abounds. Every day I count up your misdeeds. I lash myself to fury in order to love you no more. But don't I love you the more? In fact, my peerless little mother, I will tell you my secret. Set me at defiance, stay in Paris, have lovers—let everybody know it—never write me a monosyllable! Then I shall love you ten times more for it; and it is not folly, a delirious fever, and I shall not get the better of it. Oh! would Heaven I could get better. But don't tell me you are ill. Don't try to justify yourself. . . ."

Josephine hurried to see her friends and find out their ideas. She wept wherever she went. Barras, who had just pocketed a tip of £250,000 from the conqueror of Italy to induce him to stop interfering with the plan of campaign, expressed the conviction that a wife's place was beside her husband. Madame Tallien, who was getting a little tired of "Our Lady of Victories," supported that pious opinion. Josephine felt the ground slipping from under her feet. "Poor woman," observed one of her friends, "her grief was extreme when she saw that there was no means of escape. She burst into tears and sobbed as though she were going to the guillotine." *

Nobody, this time, cared to rescue her from the purge of virtue which doubtless awaited her beyond the Alps. Her mind stretched wearily forward to the harangues with which Bonaparte would receive her, the transports of his unruly passion, his fermenting plans, his quotations from "our good Ossian," his stories of his early life in Corsica; that story in particular which described how his mother had supported his father on a battlefield a few weeks before his birth.† It was nothing less than a disaster that she should have suggested that she was

* See note 78.

† See note 79.

pregnant. But who could have guessed that Bonaparte would win so many battles?

There was a final supper at the Luxembourg, at which her friends gathered to wish her God-speed. Everyone spoke of her good luck and sent messages to her husband. Sobs choked her. She seems to have felt that she was burying her bachelor days. If only Bonaparte would behave as Alexander had behaved. Dismal phrases of his letters rose in her mind. "I know not if you want money, for you never speak to me of business." She had done nothing to irritate him. She had not sent him one of her bills, though they were accumulating fast enough. Would his insatiable greed of information force her to tell him even how much she had spent?

She went home to the Rue Chantereine, to her little bedroom, the chief ornament of which was a bust of Socrates. She cried herself to sleep. In the morning her brother-in-law, Giuseppe, and Bonaparte's aide-de-camp, Junot, arrived to take her away. Junot had a subaltern with him, Lieutenant Hippolyte Charles. On July 29 her travelling carriage reached Milan and drew up at the Serbollini Palace.

## CHAPTER X

## IN ITALY

All Josephine's fears were realized. The Serbollini Palace, where her husband had installed himself, was filled with people who assumed that she had no interest in life except Bonaparte; people whom Bonaparte had disturbed in one way or another; people who hoped to get something out of Bonaparte; crazy people who wished to interest Bonaparte in their schemes; dull people who wished to make themselves agreeable to Bonaparte's wife. All these people chattered incessantly about Bonaparte, about his genius, his wisdom, his courage, his glory.

Bonaparte himself, however, was absent. She found a brief note from him, sending her a thousand kisses and telling her he was ill in bed at Roverbella. He appeared, looking rather careworn, on the 15th, just when she was beginning to enjoy herself.

His arrival set the hive humming about her ears. She was burdened with honours, blinded by reflected glory. Every one of all these irrepressible Italians wanted to kiss her hand. Bonaparte hustled her from reception to reception and banquet to banquet. He choked himself with his fiery love, when he wasn't galloping about the camps or stamping about his study. But she learned that the Austrians were sending a fresh army against him and that he must immediately take the field once more.

Her mind, always subterranean in its methods, soon discovered that there was a good deal of anxiety about the issue of the new campaign. Barras and his friends in Paris, as she had correctly guessed, were not nearly

so delighted with Bonaparte's successes as they professed to be. They were doing their best to cramp his style, in the hope that a few reverses would chasten his self-importance. She could not help admiring the busy way he went about providing against disaster, but she found listening to him inexpressibly exhausting. After two days he went away. She got rid of as many of his admirers as possible and began to look round for some companions of her own. As usual, she was provident in her plans. She had seen too many generals come and go to wish to put all her eggs in Bonaparte's basket, especially at a moment when his basket seemed so crazy. Her friends in Paris must not get the impression that she had any ambition to share Bonaparte's throne with him. Policy, as well as inclination, suggested the uses of a social life which could not, by any means, be confounded with the designs of ambition. Lieutenant Hippolyte Charles was the expression of these ideas.* The affair became known both to the army and the Italians; it created a favourable impression in Paris.

The procession of Bonaparte's victories continued. His letters began once more to multiply. The first was dated July 17.

"Ceaselessly," he wrote, "I recall your kisses, your tears, your enchanting jealousy."

He wrote the next day and the following. There was an ominous sentence in the second of these two letters. He had, he said, received a courier from Paris and had opened two letters addressed to his wife.

"You gave me permission to do so the other day. . . . I should like you to give me full permission to read your letters."

He stated further that he had questioned the courier from Milan because there was no letter from Josephine.

* See note 80.

"He tells me that he crossed over to your house and that you told him you had no commands. Fie, naughty, undutiful, cruel, tyrannous, jolly little monster!"

She realized with consternation that he was going to send for her again. She wrote to him asking him to come to her instead, if only for a night. Would he never leave her alone? As it happened, he had doubts whether he could hold Milan, for the new Austrian army was formidable and his troops had not been reinforced.

"I have at Milan a carriage suitable alike for town or country," he wrote. "You can make use of it for the journey. Bring your plate with you and some of the things you absolutely require. Travel by easy stages and during the cool part of the day so as not to tire yourself. Troops only take three days coming to Brescia. Travelling post it is only a fourteen hours' journey."

Josephine had to take the road once more. When she joined Bonaparte at Brescia on July 25 he was in serious difficulties. The Austrians were pressing him hard and there were gloomy faces everywhere. She was not at all inclined, in these circumstances, to make the best of the discomforts of campaigning within sound of the guns. On July 29 their carriage was nearly captured by an Austrian ambuscade. She wept with fright. She wanted to go away at once, in spite of her husband's assurance that the enemy should pay dearly for her anxiety. Bonaparte compelled her to approach Verona. She witnessed a skirmish and saw a number of wounded men. Fear and dismay gave her courage. She lost her temper and refused to stay another moment.

Bonaparte was compelled to yield. He sent her to Lucca as fast as galloping horses could carry her, for already the way by which she had come to him was closed. Could she doubt now that he had overreached

himself? The Senate of Lucca waited on her and made her a present of some sacred oil kept exclusively for royalty. Divided as she was between fear, anxiety, and exhaustion, she could not get out of the place quickly enough. She made for Florence and then rushed back to Milan, expecting every moment to hear of Bonaparte's defeat. But as soon as she entered Milan the bells began to ring and did not cease ringing for five days. Bonaparte had broken his second Austrian army. A letter followed her from the front, reminding her that she had gone away "vexed, annoyed, and not well."

"I am fêted wherever I go," Josephine wrote in despair to her aunt, Madame Renaudin, now Marquise de Beauharnais. "All the princes of Italy give me fêtes, even the Grand Duke of Tuscany, brother of the Emperor. Ah, well! I prefer being a private individual in France. I care not for honours bestowed in this country. I get sadly bored. My health has undoubtedly a great deal to do with making me unhappy; I am often out of sorts. If happiness could assure health I ought to be in the best of health. I have the most amiable husband imaginable. I have no time to long for anything. My wishes are his. He is all day long in adoration before me as if I was a divinity; there could not possibly be a better husband. M. Serbollini will tell you how he loves me. He (Bonaparte) often writes to my children; he loves them dearly. He is sending Hortense, by M. Serbollini, a lovely repeater, jewelled and enamelled; to Eugène a splendid gold watch."

That letter relieved her feelings, but she could not write to Bonaparte. When she wrote to him she always gave herself away. He kept bombarding her with letters and upbraiding her for her lack of interest in him. The few congenial friends whom she had been able to make in Milan arranged some excursions for her to cheer her up. They obliged her, too, by keeping the people who wanted to talk about Bonaparte at a distance. But his terrible, prying eyes were everywhere.

"No letters from you," came his disheartening complaint, "which really makes me uneasy; yet they tell me you are well and have even had an excursion to Lake Como. Every day I wait impatiently for the post which will bring me news of you."

The bells of Milan began to ring again, more clamorously this time than ever before. Crowds of frenzied Italians gathered, shouting, outside the windows; people who supposed themselves to be important jostled each other on the stairs, demanding to see Madame Bonaparte and congratulate her. On what? She could scarcely remember the names of the battles; she had the vaguest idea where they were being fought. Men, whose voices thrilled as they spoke, told her the most absurd anecdotes about Bonaparte, and actually wept as they spoke about him. They would not go away. She could find no place in which to escape from them. And—most terrible thought of all—he was coming back. After telling her in a new letter from the battlefield of Bassano about the number of prisoners he had taken, and the number of men he had killed and wounded, and about his captured guns and pontoons and baggage, he added the intelligence: "In a few days we shall meet."

She felt at that moment like a mouse in a trap; but, happily, he was not able to come as soon as he had hoped. September wore on, and the Italians became a little less tumultuous. Josephine was permitted to retire among her friends and to enjoy a few more excursions. He was watching her, however.

"I write very often and you seldom. You are naughty and undutiful; very undutiful, as well as thoughtless," he wrote on September 17. "It is disloyal to deceive a poor husband, an affectionate lover. Ought he to lose his rights because he is far away, up to the neck in business worries and anxieties?"

He wrote like a commercial traveller; the end of his letter was terrifying.

"One of these nights the doors will be burst open with a bang, as if by a jealous husband, and in a moment I shall be in your arms."

Josephine hastened to send him the kindest letter she could compose. Even that did not quench his suspicions:

"Your letters are as cold as if you were fifty; we might have been married fifteen years."

The bells of Milan rang again. This time the occasion was Arcole. Bonaparte, she was told, had rushed forward, at the crisis of that battle, carrying a flag. He had turned defeat into triumph. Her nerves were frayed. She dared not put pen to paper because she knew that he knew everything. The storm broke a week later:

"I don't love you an atom. On the contrary, I detest you. You are a good-for-nothing, very ungraceful, very tactless, very tatterdemalion. You never write to me; you don't care for your husband; you know the pleasure your letters give him, and you write him barely half a dozen lines thrown off anyhow.

"How, then, do you spend the livelong day, madame? What business of such importance robs you of the time to write to your very kind lover? What inclination stifles and alienates love, the affectionate and unvarying love which you promised me? Who may this paragon be, this new lover, who engrosses all your time, is master of your days and prevents you concerning yourself about your husband?

"Josephine, be vigilant; one fine night the doors will be broken in and I shall be before you."

She did not doubt him. Almost as soon as his letter reached her she heard that he was on his way. She fled —with Hippolyte Charles—from Milan to Genoa. Bonaparte arrived at Milan while the bells which proclaimed his victories were still ringing.

"I get to Milan," he wrote to her on November 27, 1796. "I fling myself into your room; I have left all in order to see you, to clasp you in my arms. . . . You are not there. You gad about the town amid junketings; you run farther from me when I am at hand; you care no longer for your dear Napoleon. A passing fancy made you love him. Fickleness renders him indifferent to you."

"Used to perils, I know the remedy for weariness and the ills of life. The ill-luck that I now suffer is past all calculation; I did right not to anticipate it.

"I shall be here till the evening of the 29th. Don't alter your plans; have your fling of pleasure; happiness was invented for you. The whole world is only too happy if it can please you, and only your husband is very, very unhappy."

On the following day he wrote again:

"I have received the courier whom Berthier had hurried on to Genoa. You have not had time to write me. I feel it intuitively. Surrounded with pleasures and pastimes, you would be wrong to make the least sacrifice for me. Berthier has been good enough to show me the letter which you wrote him. My intention is that you should not make the least change in your plans, nor with respect to the pleasure parties in your honour; I am of no consequence, either the happiness or the misery of a man whom you don't love is a matter of no moment.

"For my part to love you only, to make you happy, to do nothing which may vex you, that is the object and goal of my life.

"Be happy; do not reproach me, do not concern yourself in the happiness of a man who lives only in your life, rejoices only in your pleasure and happiness. When I exacted from you a love like my own, I was wrong; why expect lace to weigh as heavy as gold? When I sacrifice to you all my desires, all my thoughts, every moment of my life, I obey the sway which your charms, your disposition, and your whole personality have so effectively exerted over my unfortunate heart. I was wrong, since nature has not given me attractions with which to captivate you, but what I do deserve from Josephine is her regard and esteem, for I love her frantically and uniquely.

"Farewell, beloved wife; farewell, my Josephine. May Fate concentrate in my breast all the griefs and troubles, but may it give Josephine happy and prosperous days. Who deserves them more? When it shall be quite settled that she can love me no more, I will hide my profound grief, and will content myself with the power of being useful and serviceable to her.

"I reopen my letter to give you a kiss. Ah, Josephine . . . Josephine! . . ."

So here was a second offer of brotherly affection from a disillusioned husband. Josephine had played her hand very shrewdly on the whole. Bonaparte was tired of victories. She brought a refreshing element of defeat into his life.

## CHAPTER XI

## A FAMILY MAN

FAR from losing Bonaparte's love by her antics, Josephine increased it. She was the only human being in Italy who did not apparently care twopence about the Conqueror; the fact that she was the Conqueror's wife added piquancy to her indifference. Bonaparte could not help feeling interested in her. He might rave about her coldness, but he had to admit that it was scarcely less remarkable, in the circumstances, than his own glory. Nothing, consequently, excited him so much as the idea of adding to his conquests the conquest of Josephine the unconquerable.

So he lingered on in Milan, and in due course Josephine, who had nicely calculated the time it would take him to forget her infidelities in the flowing tide of his desire to see her again, appeared before him. Her flight had cleared her mind and soothed her irritation. She had gathered tears in case they should be wanted. She insisted that he should gratify her wifely pride in his heroism at the Battle of Lodi by giving sittings to the painter Gros, who wished to portray the crisis of that battle. When he demurred she took him on her knee and held him there in spite of his struggles. She repeated this action on several successive mornings, immediately after breakfast.* When he went away on December 16, Josephine was able to congratulate herself.

She was beginning to believe in General Bonaparte, but she was not ready, even yet, to put her whole trust in him. So the affair with Lieutenant Hippolyte Charles

* See note 81.

was resumed. Bonaparte's letters were shorter now, but there was no lack of interest in her:

"I get no news from you and I feel sure that you no longer love me."

She retaliated by expressing a wish to join him. He was compelled to tell her to stay where she was. That enabled her to say that she was ill and wanted to return to Paris.

This wish was no sooner expressed than the war came to an end and Bonaparte was free to devote himself to his wife. His triumph was complete, but it remained to gather the fruits of victory in the peace negotiations with Austria, and he was not the man to depute such a job. So Josephine had to defer her going. The news she received from Paris made it easier for her to acquiesce. Barras and his rogues had turned every honest stomach in France. Royalists and Robespierrists were making common cause against them. The spectacle of throne and guillotine in unnatural alliance was so threatening that the Director had small hope of saving himself. How was Bonaparte going to jump?

Josephine had no more claws for her spouse. She purred reassuringly through the Italian summer and supported the trials of Bonaparte's Court at Milan without grumbling. These were not light. Neither the General nor his staff had fully mastered the King business, and yet they conducted it with unflagging zeal, even on the hottest day. An anxious moment occurred when Bonaparte lost his temper with a young countess who had come to beg.* There was ample excuse for his exasperation, but the incident made a painful impression on those who witnessed it. Josephine, on this and other occasions, tempered the Corsican blast to the shorn lambs of aristocracy and earned a reputation for good breeding.

* See note 82.

*"Je gagne des batailles; Joséphine me gagne les cœurs,"* remarked her husband.

The Court at Milan convinced Citizeness Bonaparte that the cat was not going to jump at all. There was no fear of Bonaparte helping to put a crown on anybody's head or giving encouragement to anybody who might wish to cut off his head. Barras could keep his mind easy. That shrewd forecast was soon confirmed. The General held a big review in Milan and made his soldiers swear to march to Paris, if necessary, to defend the Republic. His language was stimulating, his meaning clear. Neither throne nor guillotine had anything to hope for from him. The Government, therefore, ought to put a bridle on its cowardice and mend its ways. Barras' spirits revived. He appears to have come to the conclusion that, since only the Directory could guarantee Bonaparte's Italian conquests, the General's support could be counted on.*

Sound reasoning; but Josephine knew better. She was privileged, as Barras was not, to hear Bonaparte exhorting the Italians daily in the practice of civic and domestic virtue and in the punishment of disreputable administrators. By way of example, he had Hippolyte Charles dismissed and sent back to France. He toured the Italian Lakes with his wife and quite embarrassed people by his connubial salutations.† The lawful raptures of the eagle on his nest edified Lombardy and, in due course, edified France also. There, said the virtuous peasant, is the man for my money.

It was Josephine's first taste of respectability, and even if the helping was large, she liked the flavour. Her rendering of an honest woman was judged to be convincing as well as gracious. Barras enjoyed the joke as much as anybody, but began to understand why Josephine had

* See note 83. † See note 84.

been summoned to Italy. Uneasiness troubled him; the letters he had been wont to receive from Bonaparte reached him no longer.

Josephine, behind her smart ponies in the Corso at Milan, could not make up her mind what Bonaparte's game was. Her difficulty was due to her inability to distinguish between Paris and France. Was Paris likely to be amused by the domestic felicity of General Bonaparte? Perhaps so, since domestic felicity was unconventional. But for a day or two only. She wondered what would happen after that. In the evening, after dinner, when they sat with the windows open eating ices from the Corsia de'Servi while the Italians cheered in the square below, she tried sometimes to discover her destiny with the aid of a pack of cards. These, unfortunately, told her nothing about the 20,000,000 Frenchmen and Frenchwomen, diligent, thrifty, religious, who were decorating their cottages with pictures of General Bonaparte and his wife.

## CHAPTER XII

## THE BUONAPARTE FAMILY

His wife was not enough for Bonaparte. He must have his mother and brothers and sisters with him also. When the very hot weather began in July he moved his Court from Milan to the Castle of Mombello, and invited his whole family to join him. Josephine was told to make herself agreeable.

The Buonaparte family was scattered, each member being busy with some task allotted since "Napoleone" became a great man. But it gathered in a twinkling. On June 1, 1797, travelling carriages arrived and disgorged bullet-headed men and swarthy women: Mama Letizia, Napoleone's brothers Giuseppe and Luigi, and his sisters Elisa, Paolina, and Carlotta. Josephine looked in vain for a friendly face. Madame Buonaparte was then a woman of forty-six. She had borne ten children, but retained her figure and her health. A woman like an Alpine peak, stripped of flesh by hard bodily work, thrifty as a bone, and packed with the wisdom of diligent motherhood.

"You are killing yourself," said Mama Letizia to her son the moment she saw him.*

Josephine kissed her mother-in-law and was aware that Madame Buonaparte had noticed the rouge on her cheeks. What an odd company was the Buonaparte family! Rather ill-dressed, very ill-mannered, awkward, and yet bursting with pride. Elisa had the grave brow of the General, but she was plain. The looks of the

* See note 85.

family had gone to "Paulette," as they called the second girl, who was a beauty. Bonaparte embraced them all rather solemnly and turned them over to his wife. His eye warned Josephine that the occasion demanded restraint. He was right. Paolina soon broke into giggles, and then, when Josephine turned her back, put out her tongue.* The General ordered everybody to be merry. His own idea of merriment was games of a boisterous character.† Josephine did her best to please, and seems to have won a grudging regard from Mama Letizia, who, recalling her own husband's excitement when summoned to see the King at Versailles, may have felt a certain sympathy for a woman robbed by the Revolution of her birthright. The Buonaparte family, including Napoleone, believed that Josephine had been a familiar figure at the Court of Louis XVI.‡ She was not a snob, but she had the feelings of a Frenchwoman towards Italians. How could she help thinking as she looked at these greasy faces, innocent as yet of the decencies of a woman's toilet in hot weather, that she had come down in the world? The Buonapartes resisted her superior airs with all their might. Like peasants who have discovered a buried treasure, they were suspicious of being swindled, and the more ladylike Napoleone's wife appeared the more they distrusted her. No fine words for them. Napoleone was the coming man and he was theirs. His brothers and sisters had more claim on him than Beauharnais' brats. They took no pains to hide their opinion that the lad might have done a great deal better in the way of wiving than a middle-aged widow with two children. If they didn't express themselves in so many words, that was due solely to their resolve not to hurt Napoleone's feelings. As things stood, Josephine had better realize that her husband was the second and not

* See note 86. † See note 87. ‡ See note 88.

PAOLINA BUONAPARTE.
*From the painting by* ROBERT LEFÉVRE.

the eldeſt son. Josephine observed with aſtonishment that Napoleone did not greatly resent this view of her position. He deferred to Giuseppe, whom he seemed to regard as the natural head of his family. He began, too, to trouble himself about making further provision for his younger brothers and siſters. When, for example, his aide-de-camp, Junot, wished to marry Paolina he rejected the proposal, saying that it would be like marrying hunger to thirſt,* and promptly gave the young baggage to General Leclerc, whose father was a rich merchant. He was indignant, too, because Elisa had married the impecunious Bacchiochi without his consent. And yet his own wife had come to him with no dowry but her debts.† Napoleone Buonaparte, the Citizeness Bonaparte perceived, was a different person from the General, her husband. The Buonaparte family was aware of no such diſtinction.

As entertainment followed entertainment her aſtonishment increased. Civic revelry and moral mirth have no points of contact. The pride of country ſtock in their lad o' parts would have been incomprehensible to her in any event, and in this case complicating emotions of jealousy, determined by Corsican and Italian traditions, were an added bewilderment. Giuseppe grew peevish if his claims of birth were overlooked. Elisa and Paolina asserted their blood relationship in face of her wifehood. Even Mama Letizia seemed to think that Josephine's place was among her girls. The Frenchwoman humbled her pride to please them, but remained aware that her success was doubtful. They went as they had come—garrulous, untidy; above all, with their thirſt for honours and emoluments unslaked.‡

The General took his wife with him to the caſtle of Pessariano at Friuli for the peace conference with the

* See note 89. † See note 90. ‡ See note 91.

Austrians. Josephine was in mourning for Fortuné, who had been killed by a mongrel, and she was sulky with Bonaparte, who had thanked the mongrel's owner.* The General had never been merrier. News had just reached him that Barras had made a bonfire of both guillotine and throne and got himself and his fellow-Directors well hated in doing it.† Now for a hard bargain with the Austrians. Josephine shepherded the plenipotentiaries while Bonaparte sheared them. When he smashed Count Cobentzal's best china‡ by way of reinforcing an argument, she was at hand to gather the pieces and soothe the ugly, naughty old fellow. By the time the Treaty of Campo Formio was signed she had made friends with everybody, and the snobbish element in her husband's character was gratified. But still she did not know what Bonaparte's game might be.

Lacking knowledge, she resolved not to share his triumphal return to Paris. He was going to Rastaadt to a further conference; she pleaded exhaustion and a mother's wish to be near her son. The Alps were already covered with snow. She travelled slowly, avoiding, when possible, occasions of public welcome. Gloomy thoughts, which the gifts of jewels and plate that were showered on her did not dispel, oppressed her. Did Bonaparte hope to become one of the Directors? He had the devil's own luck, but could he hold his own among the politicians? She thought of his Corsican accent, his fiery temper, his manners; above all, his family. Milan was not Paris. Besides, he had fired his cannon at the Parisians, who were slow to forget.

She allowed the General to reach Paris before her and get his public reception over. Barras, she felt confident, would force him to show his hand. But no. When she arrived in the Rue de la Victoire, as the Rue Chantereine

* See note 92. † See note 93. ‡ See note 94.

was now called, the badger had not been drawn. Sentries had to make a way for her carriage through the crowds, and the house was full of people. Bonaparte, dressed like a don in gown and hood, appeared to welcome her with Hortense by his side.* He had just returned from a meeting of the Institute, and informed her that science alone could win victories without tears. Aged philosophers stood in ranks behind him. She consulted his aides-de-camp, but they were as much in the dark as everybody else.

"The General has no more interest in war," they told her sadly.

Next morning the Citizen Talleyrand paid them a visit. He and Bonaparte entered into lively discussions about Ossian. The Citizeness Bonaparte was unable to detect a gleam of laughter among the clouds of their solemnity.

The Citizen Talleyrand, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, gave a ball in the General's honour, and the dressmakers of Paris doubled their prices.† "What," they cried, when their customers protested, "you grudge a little extra on an occasion such as this! Well, take the frock. We don't want people to say that it was our fault that badly dressed women appeared at the fête given by the nation to its hero." Josephine could not escape the ball, but she came to it in a bad temper, with red eyes and a sulky mouth,‡ and looked her age. Bonaparte was as devoted as ever; he clung to her all through supper, and Barras scarcely got half a dozen words with her. The 4,000 guests gaped their astonishment. What a man! What an ungrateful woman! A further surprise was in store for them. The Citizeness Stael was introduced to the General. He turned his back on her.

Did he not care for clever women? The guests

* See note 95. † See note 96. ‡ See note 97.

crowded closer to see how Necker's daughter would take her rebuff. They heard her ask:

"General, what sort of women do you prefer?"

"I prefer my wife."

"That's natural. But what sort of woman do you admire most?"

"Good housekeepers."

"Ah, but who is your ideal woman?"

"She who bears the most children, Citizeness."

The Citizeness Stael had written to Bonaparte in Italy offering herself as his mistress.* Glancing at Josephine, she murmured:

"You're a wise man, General."

This was not the Citizeness Bonaparte's opinion. She was observed to flush; tears gleamed in her eyes.

"Do you want the Parisians to laugh at you?" she asked her husband viciously.

"Why not?"

The General took his wife home shortly after midnight, but the ball went on until eight o'clock the next morning. So the guests had plenty of time to discuss Bonaparte's ideal woman.

Bonaparte left soon after this to inspect the defences of the northern coasts. In his absence Josephine got into touch with Barras and learned, no doubt, about the proposed expedition to Egypt. Bonaparte was inconsiderate enough to return to Paris before he was expected. She was placed under the painful necessity of sending a hurried note to Barras' secretary.†

"Bonaparte arrived to-night. I beg you, my dear Bottot, to assure Barras of my regret that I cannot dine with him. Tell him not to forget me. You know my position better than anyone."

* See note 98.

† See note 99.

The horde of the Buonapartes arrived and settled in Paris. Giuseppe came from Rome with his wife and sister-in-law and his two daughters. Near him were Luigi and Mama Letizia—back from a visit to Corsica—and the child Carlotta. Luciani, *alias* "Brutus," and his wife soon followed. They prowled about the Rue de la Victoire, to Josephine's intense exasperation. There is nothing which the townsman resents so much as the inability of the countryman to mind his own business. When she heard that Luigi had begun to make a nuisance of himself by hanging round the boarding-school at St. Germain, where her cousin Emilie de Beauharnais was being educated, along with Hortense and Carlotta, by the worthy Madame Campan, her anger exploded. What! Did Luigi also aspire to raise himself in the world by a marriage into the Beauharnais family? She would not hear of it. One Buonaparte was enough. She wept and threatened until the General, for the sake of peace, induced his aide-de-camp, Lavalette, a man of substance, to marry the girl there and then.*

On April 4, 1798, three months after his return from Italy, Bonaparte left Paris for Toulon, taking Josephine with him. From Toulon Josephine wrote to Hortense:

"I have been at Toulon for the last five days, my dear Hortense; I was not at all tired by the journey, but I was very sorry to leave you so suddenly without being able to bid you and my dear Caroline (Carlotta) good-bye. However, my dear daughter, I am a little consoled by the hope that I shall soon embrace you. Bonaparte does not wish me to sail with him; he wishes me to drink the waters before I undertake the voyage to Egypt. He will send for me in two months' time. So, my Hortense, I shall still have the pleasure of clasping you in my arms and of assuring you that I love you very dearly.

"Adieu, my daughter."

* See note 100.

Bonaparte had decided to take Eugène with him as aide-de-camp. A few days before the fleet of 510 sail left Toulon the Citizeness Bonaparte inspected her husband's and son's quarters in the flagship *L'Orient*. A group of officers, which included Berthier, Lannes, Murat, Junot, Lavalette, and Eugène, accompanied her. The day of departure arrived. She walked with Bonaparte to the jetty. He hugged her; descended a step; returned. "God knows," he exclaimed, "how long it will be." She was crying. They mingled tears and kisses. Afterwards Josephine climbed to a neighbouring balcony and waved her handkerchief in the intervals of weeping into it.

The next day, with a sigh of relief, she set out for Plombières. She could afford a little dissipation, for her husband was allowing her £1,600 a year. Nobody, except Bonaparte himself, perhaps, had more faith than she in baths and douches. She was soon in the hands of the doctors and masseurs, and they physicked and pommelled her into the ownership once more of a presentable figure and clear complexion. So fit did they make her that a fall from a high balcony which she sustained did her no lasting harm. It was a season of meditation, one of the fruits of which was a resolve to have nothing more to do with the Buonapartes. But when she got back to Paris they began again to prowl round her dwelling. Moreover, Giuseppe paid her her allowance.

What did they want? Luciani enlightened her. She must remember, he hinted, whose wife she was. Napoleone's brothers were not going to see him let down in his absence. This brother-in-law had an ugly, threatening way with him. He was a thick-set, tough-looking fellow, inclined, especially since his election to the Council of the Five Hundred, to give himself airs.

She thought things over and decided to buy a place in the country. Croissy was no longer available, for Madame Holstein had died while she was in Italy; but there was a house for sale, not very far away from Croissy, named Malmaison. She went to see the place, found it in bad repair, but fell in love with the gardens. The price was much too high. Would they give her possession if she put down a small instalment? Everything was arranged as she wished.

She spent a month or two playing with her new toy, hanging the pictures and filling the gardens with the statues which had been given to her in Italy. Her Florentine mosaics were placed in her drawing-room. But she got most pleasure out of arranging the collection of pearls and diamonds and cameos to which the cities of Lombardy, Venice, Naples, and even Rome, had contributed. She was not left without company in her retreat. Barras looked her up, so did the Citizen Hippolyte Charles, who came to thank her for the introductions she had given him to a number of army contractors. A rakish calash—admirably horsed—brought him to her gate; he assured her that he had already made a great deal of money.

Josephine had been behaving pretty well and was not disposed, at the moment, to embark on any fresh adventure; but very soon a piece of news reached her which compelled her to reconsider her position. This was to the effect that Bonaparte's entire fleet had been destroyed at the mouth of the Nile by the English Admiral, Nelson. Would Bonaparte ever be able to return to France? She looked wistfully at her pleasant rooms and her still more pleasant gardens, and wondered if it would soon be necessary to part with them. She ordered her ponies and drove to the Luxembourg. In prosperous times it is easy to forget that Fortune has

wings, but the first breath of adversity recalls the fact with cruel emphasis. At such moments self-preservation is the liveliest instinct. The pension of a general's widow had no attractions for her. She found Barras in great good humour, fully persuaded that he and his fellow-Directors had heard the last of General Bonaparte. And to think that only a few months ago they had been so apprehensive! Barras urged her to show herself more frequently in Paris, and Madame Tallien joined her entreaties to those of her lover. It was much that these two bore her no ill-will; nevertheless, she returned full of anxious forebodings and more firmly persuaded than ever that, as a husband, a general of the Republic was a purely speculative counter. Was she growing old that she wished so ardently for a secure position in the world? Anyhow, it was essential to face facts. She balanced the probabilities in wakeful nights. Bonaparte might succeed in returning to France, but what sort of a figure would he cut? He had lost a great fleet, and the odds were long, in spite of the victories he had won, that he would lose his army as well. The best that he could hope for now was to be allowed to join the starving rabble of half-pay officers who jostled one another in Barras' anterooms. She could see no future for him; it was this cheerless prospect that finally determined her course.

What that course was Paris heard in a curious, roundabout way. It was related that the countryfolk at Malmaison were privileged very often to see the Citizeness Bonaparte walking, in the evening, among the trees of her park, arm-in-arm with her son.* The mistake was natural enough, for the details of the General's home life were not at this period the property of every cottager in the land; in the capital people were better informed. A lively curiosity about the identity of

* See note 101.

Josephine's visitor was aroused. He was soon recognized as Hippolyte Charles.

Even the Paris of the Directory confessed to a shock when it learned that Hippolyte Charles had taken up his abode permanently at Malmaison, but that was nothing to the shock which the news occasioned the Buonapartes. These worthy folk were quite as anxious as Josephine about the fate of the Egyptian expedition, and with much better reason. Their shirts were on Napoleone. Mortified feelings, fears for the future, great pride, bitterness, found their focus at Malmaison. A vendetta was decreed. It was carried on with the customary secrecy. Neither Giuseppe nor Luciani—Luigi was in Egypt—nor yet Mama Letizia visited Josephine. But they kept themselves informed about all she was doing, and they passed on their information. Many of their letters to Egypt fell into the hands of the English, but not all. Bonaparte, on his way to the siege of Acre, learned the truth.

"I saw Bonaparte," recounts Bourrienne,* "walking alone with Junot, as was his custom. I was not very far away from them and I know not what made me watch him during their conversation. The General's face, which was always pale for some unknown reason, suddenly became still paler. The muscles of his face seemed to contract; his eyes became fixed and he struck his forehead several times. After talking for about a quarter of an hour he left Junot and returned to me. I had never seen him look so angry or so preoccupied. I advanced to meet him; as soon as we were together he said in a harsh, brusque tone: 'You are not my friend. Oh, women, women, Josephine! . . . If you really were my friend, you would have told me all I have just learned from Junot, he is a true friend. . . . Josephine! And we are parted by six hundred leagues! You ought to have told me. Josephine! To think that she should deceive me so. . . . She! . . . Woe betide

* See note 102.

them! . . . I will exterminate that breed of effeminate puppies and coxcombs! . . . As for her, I will divorce her. Yes, a divorce. And everybody shall hear of it. I must write. I know everything now. It is your fault. You ought to have told me."

Bourrienne states that he tried to pacify the General, and mentioned the great fame he had acquired by his conquest of Egypt.

"My fame?" Bonaparte cried. "Ah, what would I not give to learn that what Junot has just told me was not true! So dearly do I love that woman. If Josephine is guilty, a divorce shall separate us for ever. I won't be the laughing-stock of all the lazy good-for-nothing devils in Paris. I will write to Joseph, he shall get us divorced."

His letter to Giuseppe was not written until later, and by this time the first gust of his rage had blown by.

"I have a great deal of domestic trouble, for the veil* is entirely rent," he declared. "Arrange for me to have a country house ready to receive me, either near Paris or in Burgundy, on my arrival in France. I mean to pass the winter in the country and to live the life of a hermit. I am sick of my fellow-creatures. I am in need of solitude and isolation, and earthly splendours weary me. My heart is worked out with suffering. Glory is but a poor thing at twenty-nine years of age. I have drained the cup of human bliss; I now only have to become a thoroughly selfish creature. I mean to keep my house to myself; I will share it with nobody. I no longer have anybody to live for.

"Adieu, my only friend. . . ."

Josephine's conception of her husband as a ruined gambler was far from that which he cherished of himself. The doctrine that everything counts and nothing matters is the most sustaining in dark days, for it allows attention to be given to present difficulties without prejudice to future plans. In spite of the fact that two

* See note 103.

Turkish armies, each one double the size of his own force, were advancing against him and that plague had broken out in his ranks, in spite, too, of his own very natural distress, Bonaparte was able to calculate, nicely, the effect of his wife's parade of unfaithfulness on his fortunes. It would amuse Paris; it would grieve France. Both amusement and grief would be discounted to a great extent if he let it be known that he was going to withdraw for a time from the world. Napoleone the Corsican had raved to Bourrienne about a public divorce, the letter to Giuseppe expressed the considered views of Napoleon the Frenchman. These were by no means welcome to the Buonapartes. "If he doesn't divorce her at once," they told each other, "he will end by forgiving her." Luigi managed to get back from Egypt about this time. He had letters for Josephine from her husband and son, but they persuaded him not to go near her.

This, the first open avowal of the vendetta, made her a little uneasy, especially as she was enjoying herself so much. Present happiness, while in a mutable world, carries with it the assurance of future sorrow, always quickens the apprehension of danger. She shut her ears to the news from the outside and gave herself to Hippolyte. He belonged to the type she had favoured from girlhood, a dapper and yet thick-set little dandy. His skin was very dark and his hair jet-black. He had fine, rolling eyes and very fine teeth, and he was proud of his small hands and feet. Bonaparte was not more careful of his hands than Hippolyte Charles. Wit, too, of the kind which Josephine found irresistible, was added to these physical attractions. Hippolyte had a gift for making puns and producing, without hesitating a second, remarks with double meanings that you might take or leave at your pleasure. He had a way of wriggling his body when he threw off one of these

remarks, which convulsed his listeners. It would have been impossible to find a more amusing fellow. This kind always knows on which side its bread is buttered. Hippolyte and Barras became friends, and Josephine's relations with the Government were re-established on their old, firm footing.

She had no illusions, however. The lady's man belongs to his mistress only while his mistress is useful to him. Consequently, when she saw what a mess Barras was making of the conduct of affairs, anxiety began to disturb her happiness once more. A new war with Austria had broken out, and all Bonaparte's conquests in Italy had been lost. In addition, the enemy was actually threatening the frontiers of France. The indignation occasioned by these disasters demanded a victim. Would Barras be driven out of office?

It looked very like it. Hippolyte, who went to Paris on business sometimes, brought the news to Malmaison that a number of advanced Republicans had formed what they called a "Party of Clean Hands." This title had an ominous sound in Josephine's ears; it recalled both Robespierre's purge of virtue and Bonaparte's diatribes against the army contractors and the jobbers. Her forebodings were justified. The new party succeeded in bringing about a reconstruction of the Directory and in securing two out of the five Directorships for its nominees. Though it did not succeed in displacing Barras, it wrought a drastic curtailment of his power, and was able, in consequence, to address itself to the abatement of scandal. Its leader, Gohir, now the President of the Directory, ventured to utter a few words of remonstrance to the Citizeness Bonaparte.*

The rebuke was administered tactfully. Madame Gohir, who was an old acquaintance of Josephine's,

* See note 104.

invited her privately to the Luxembourg. But there was no mistaking the significance of the occasion. Josephine, very much embarrassed, protested that she and Hippolyte Charles were merely good friends.

Gohir assumed a severe tone.

"You tell me," he said, "that you and the Citizen Charles are nothing more than friends. But as this friendship is so exclusive that it makes you forget the laws of decency and morality, I feel I must talk to you as if it was really a case of love and urge you to get a divorce; a friendship which can make you forget everything else will compensate you for what you will lose by a divorce."

Josephine returned to Malmaison in great agitation. She knew very well that if she got a divorce her usefulness to Hippolyte Charles would terminate. It was only as General Bonaparte's wife that she was able to exert influence on the army contractors. To divorce her husband would be to lose her lover. What would be left to her? Barras had quite enough to do now to look after himself, and, besides, rogues are not careful of their accomplices when their luck turns. She resolved to hide herself behind the walls of her park; in time, probably, people would forget all about her. Unhappily, just as she had reached this decision, public interest in her was quickened by the news from Egypt. Far from having been overwhelmed by the disaster which had befallen his fleet, Bonaparte had marched through Palestine and defeated a great Turkish army on the banks of the Jordan. The East was resounding with his triumphs just as, a year before, Europe had resounded with them. "What a contrast," cried the Parisians, "to the present miserable record of defeat and loss in Italy!" Enthusiasm, like hatred, soon finds its focus. Since the General himself was far away, the General's wife became once more

the object of attention. To her horror, Josephine heard herself hailed again as "Our Lady of Victories."

At last she perceived the magnitude of the danger which threatened her. The glaring eyes of the Buonaparte family began to haunt her dreams. They were biding the day which would surely arrive. What news they would have for Napoleone when, flushed with victory, he returned to Paris. Mama Letizia, Giuseppe, Luciani, Luigi, Elisa, Paolina, Carlotta . . . had she any weapons now against that formidable horde, armed to the teeth with their greed and their spite? Uncharitable winds, an earnest of the approaching hurricane, chilled her courage. Without reputation, without friends, without resources, what was to become of her?

Bewildered and frightened, she dismissed Charles from her house and began to show herself daily in Paris. She dared not visit the Buonapartes, but paid many visits to the Gohirs and even tried to associate herself with the "Party of Clean Hands." On the night of October 13, 1799, while supping with the Director Gohir and his wife, she received a letter from Eugène* telling her that he had landed in France in company with Bonaparte.

The letter shook in her hand and she became deadly pale.

"I must go and meet him," she whispered.

She drove to Madame Campan's school and took Hortense away with her. They travelled through Sens, Joigny, Anserre, and Chalons-sur-Saonne; Bonaparte, on the contrary, was driving to Paris by way of Moulins, Nevers, and Cosne. At Lyons† they learned that they had missed him. With a sinking heart Josephine realized that the Buonapartes would have Napoleone to themselves for three days.

* See note 105. † See note 106.

## CHAPTER XIII

## VENDETTA?

When the ship which brought Bonaparte from Egypt reached Frejus the fisherfolk of that village carried the General ashore in defiance of the quarantine officers.

"There is plague in Egypt," these officers cried.

"Better plague," they were answered, "than the Austrians."

This was the keynote of the welcome which France gave to the conqueror of Egypt. Every town and village in the country, when news of his landing was received, dressed itself in flags and erected triumphal arches. Everywhere the same expression was made use of: "The Saviour of France has returned." The General, who had Eugène with him in his carriage, was frankly astonished. He had counted on arousing enthusiasm; instead he encountered worship. His manner as he approached the capital became grave. When he spoke at all to the frenzied crowds that mobbed his carriage, he spoke only of the plight of France, never of himself. He observed with satisfaction that nobody referred now to his Corsican origin. "I was determined to be absolutely French." The orators* who harangued him at the various stopping-places recalled the example which he had set during his campaign in Italy. "Glory," they declared, "had been united in his person to goodness, and fortitude to the felicity of a blameless home life," and these essentially French virtues proclaimed the General and his wife true children of the Motherland.

* See note 107.

Eugène's presence beside his stepfather was everywhere noted and commented on.

Why, Bonaparte asked himself, was not Josephine with him to warm, by her peculiar grace, this valuable sentiment? He felt his need of her; most of all—for she, at any rate, was "absolutely French"—of her instinctive understanding of her countrymen. When, however, at six o'clock in the morning of October 18, 1799, his carriage drew up in the Rue de la Victoire, it was not the French language of the *ancien régime* which greeted him, but the Corsican-Italian patois. Napoleone's brothers and sisters at such a moment were far too excited to talk even broken French.

"Is Josephine ill?" he asked anxiously.

Pitying smiles answered him.

"Didn't she meet you? In that case, she must have run away."

What! Had she played her old trick of the Milan days on him again? And with Hippolyte Charles again, too? By Heaven! he was done with her. They did not need to stimulate his rage, but they could not resist the temptation. In the absence of Luciani and Luigi, who had also gone to meet him and taken the wrong road, Giuseppe and Paolina recounted the story of Malmaison, while Mama Letizia shook her wrinkled old head. As his spirit kindled to the vendetta, Napoleone forgot that he was a Frenchman.

But action and reaction are equal and opposite. If Napoleone had forgotten France, France had not forgotten Bonaparte. The Citizen Collot, a cool and sensible man, came to breakfast. When he heard the news—for Napoleone was quite unable to contain himself—he offered some advice.*

"Think," he said, "of France. The eye of the

* See note 108.

nation is fixed on you. France expects you to devote your life to her well-being; if she sees that you allow yourself to be worried by domestic quarrels your glory will fade. She will look on you as one of those luckless husbands whom Molière was so fond of holding up to ridicule. Leave your wife and her faults alone."

"No," declared the husband. "I have quite made up my mind. She shall not set foot in my house any more. What do I care for what people will say? They will cackle for a day or two and then, on the third day, they will forget all about it. The future is so big with events; what effect will our separation have? It will have no effect whatever on me. My wife shall go to Malmaison. I shall stay here. The public knows quite enough about the matter not to be mistaken as to my reasons for sending her away."

Collot listened in silence. As he was going away he ventured to remark:

"Your violence proves to me that you are still very much in love with her. When she appears and begs to be forgiven you will forgive her and you will feel happier."

This shrewd estimate provoked a fresh outburst of rage, in which Napoleone declared that, if he were not sure of his feelings, he would tear his heart out and fling it into the fire. He clutched with tense fingers at his breast as he spoke. Most of the two days* which followed were spent with his family, but it was impossible wholly to exclude public affairs. Hundreds of callers visited the Rue de la Victoire and demanded to see General Bonaparte. Crowds, too, thronged the narrow street and raised cheers, at intervals, for the "Man of France." Napoleone, surrounded by the Buonapartes, was com-

* See note 109.

pelled to recall the fact that Josephine was a Frenchwoman. He knew by this time that she had not run away from him, for Luciani and Luigi had returned with news of her. By their recklessness in imputing to their enemy the worst possible motives the Buonapartes had done her a service.

On the third day Josephine returned. Any doubts she had felt about her husband's prospects had been removed by her journey, which had been little less of a triumphal progress than Bonaparte's. Her red eyes and care-worn features announced the state of her feelings. The Buonapartes, who had not quitted their posts, told her savagely that Napoleone had decided to divorce her and that he was determined not to see her at all. Disregarding them, she ran to his study. The door was locked. She knocked, but received no answer, though she heard her husband's and Giuseppe's voices within. She went to her bedroom, enduring on the way the triumphant glances of the Buonapartes.

In moments of danger perceptions become acute. It flashed across her mind that, as the Parisians associated her with Bonaparte's victories, Bonaparte would be loath to lose her, no matter what Napoleone's feelings might be. Could she supply Bonaparte with an excuse for separating himself from the vendetta? Her usually fertile mind did not immediately provide the idea she required, and, consequently, she gave way for a time to despair and even persuaded herself that she would soon be under the necessity of returning to the sugar refinery in Martinique. With hair unkempt and her dress in disorder she rushed back, on two separate occasions, to the study door.* On the second of these occasions she beat on the door with her fists and begged for admission. The only result of her pleading was an order from her

* See note 110.

husband, conveyed through the Buonapartes, to retire as soon as possible to Malmaison.

After a sleepless night she began to make her preparations for departure. She availed herself, however, of every means of delay, in the manner of a retreating but unbeaten soldier who uses such cover as the ground affords to prolong his retreat. Time, she felt sure, was on her side because, from hour to hour, France grew more determined to commit herself to General Bonaparte. Could he, a Corsican, at the moment when the leadership of the French was passing into his hands, divorce a Frenchwoman from his bed? What she feared most was his dread of being called a weakling by the Buonapartes. Once he had driven her out he would not have the courage to call her back again. At the last moment the idea occurred to her to send her children to plead for her.* She instructed them to throw themselves at Bonaparte's feet and beg that, before he turned their mother adrift, he would hear what she had to say in her defence.

Eugène and Hortense were only too glad to obey her. They sent a humble request to their stepfather that he would allow them to say good-bye to him before they left his home for ever. The little man, who had been looking wretchedly unhappy, agreed at once. Josephine had not failed him after all. Giuseppe was with him when he received his stepchildren. They carried out faithfully the instructions their mother had given them.

"Go and bring your mother," said Bonaparte.

Eugène led Josephine into the room. She was weeping bitterly and tottered on her feet. When she saw her husband she stretched out her hands and then sank to the floor. He caught her in his arms and laid her on a sofa.

* See note 111.

When she recovered, her children were no longer in the room; but Giuseppe remained with his brother. Bonaparte asked her if what he had been told about her relations with Hippolyte Charles was true. He expected a denial; on the contrary, she confessed everything. Dumb with astonishment at her boldness the brothers gazed at one another. How could Bonaparte forgive her now? He flew into a rage and ordered her out of his study, telling her to go instantly to Malmaison.* Meekly she obeyed him, but she left the study door open behind her and he did not shut it.

"I never saw anything like it in my whole life," he said afterwards. "And there was that great booby, Joseph, listening the whole time. . . . As she was coming downstairs, crying, I saw Eugène and Hortense following her, sobbing. God did not give me a heart to let me see tears shed without feeling moved myself. . . . Eugène was with me in Egypt. I have accustomed myself to look on him as my adopted son; he is so brave; he is such a good boy. Hortense is just coming out; all who know her speak highly of her. I confess I was deeply moved. I couldn't resist the sobs of those two poor children. I said to myself: 'Are they to be the victims of their mother's ill-conduct?' I stopped Eugène. Hortense turned back with her mother. I said nothing. How could I help it? every man is weak."

When Luciani† called the next morning he found Bonaparte in bed with Josephine. Gloom had vanished from the household and the General was full of plans.

Reconciliation came opportunely. Bonaparte had his foot in the stirrup of the unruly charger which had thrown Louis XVI., Brissot, Roland, Danton, and Robespierre, and was in no position to scatter his wits with domestic quarrels. At the horse's head stood Siéyès, with his Constitution of the year 1792 bulging his pocket, but

* See note 112. † See note 113.

the ostler was timid. If the saddle was to be reached and retained, courage and determination were essential. The situation was simple enough; enemies on the frontiers, ruin at home; disorder everywhere. France had begun to regret Robespierre, since whose death she had not known an honest ruler, but the guillotine frightened her. She was ready to help Bonaparte to mount because he promised safety abroad and good government at home. The only objection to him was that, being a soldier, he might be tempted to rule only by the sword. That was the Jacobins' cue; they made the most of it, for they had hope, since Barras' eclipse, of reaching the saddle themselves.

Bonaparte had conceived, nevertheless, the idea of winning these opponents to his side. Had he not been a Jacobin himself, the close personal friend of Augustin Robespierre, and one of those to suffer arrest and imprisonment after Thermidor?* His, too, was the sword which had defeated the Royalist insurrection of Vendémiaire. These services might very well, he thought, afford assurance that the Revolution would be safe in his hands. Unhappily, there was the savagery of Barras to offset them. On the day when Barras made his bonfire of throne and guillotine and sent his opponents to rot in exile in Cayenne,† long ears had heard the booming of Bonaparte's guns on the other side of the Alps, and it had been recalled that the Conqueror of Italy was Barras' protégé. Protests had not availed to dispel that illusion, and some opposition, therefore, was inevitable unless violent measures were adopted right away.

Bonaparte refused to consider violent measures and rebuked those of his supporters—the number included Fouché, perhaps Talleyrand, too—who proposed them. His journey through France had convinced him that the

* See note 114. † See note 115.

nation was at his back;* his victories in Italy and Egypt had endeared him to the soldiers; the Liberals, sticklers always for the forms of consent in government, had promised support; Paris was at his door. Should he incur the odium of a *coup d'état* from fear of a handful of Extremists?

A simple plan was formulated. Siéyès and his friend Roger Ducos promised to resign their posts as Directors and to bribe Barras to do the same. If he consented, a majority of the five Directors would have vacated office and, in terms of the Constitution, government would be impossible. It would then be necessary for the two houses of Parliament, the Ancients and the Five Hundred, to choose new heads of the State. The names of Bonaparte, Siéyès, and Roger Ducos would be submitted to them. The chief danger attending this plan was the possibility that the Jacobins under the leadership of Gohir and Moulins, the remaining Directors, might succeed in mobilizing the mob of Paris. To avoid it, Siéyès, whose influence in the Council Ancients was great, persuaded that body to exercise its right of naming the place where Parliament should meet. Marie Antoinette's palace at St. Cloud was chosen. At the same time the Ancients appointed General Bonaparte commander of the troops which were to superintend the removal of Parliament from Paris and gave him authority to police the capital. These decisions were hotly resented by the Jacobins in the Five Hundred, but as the precaution had been taken to summon this, the lower, House for a much later hour than that appointed for the meeting of the Ancients, protest was unavailing. Luciani Buonaparte, member for Corsica, happened to be President of the Five Hundred; he announced curtly that the Ancients were acting within their rights and that, consequently, he could permit

* See note 116.

neither criticism nor discussion. When the members emerged from the Hall of Assembly they beheld their President's brother, the General, reviewing his troops and listened to shouts from soldiers and civilian spectators of "*Vive Bonaparte.*" Gohir and Moulins were placed under military surveillance.

Josephine had played a modest but useful part in these preliminary negotiations. Her friendship with Gohir and his wife enabled her to lull that worthy man's suspicions until too late for effective opposition.* She acted, too, as hostess at the breakfast given in the little house in the Rue de la Victoire during the early morning meeting of the Ancients, and entertained the company of exalted soldiers whom her husband had invited in anticipation of his appointment. When, at the end of the meal, news arrived that the appointment had been made, she appeared with Bonaparte on the balcony of the house.

But he left her at home when he journeyed, the next morning, to St. Cloud. It was a golden autumn morning, and the procession of cabs and hired carriages which carried the deputies out of Paris looked as gay as that other procession which had brought the King captive to the capital ten years before had looked drab and melancholy. History was reversing itself. Nevertheless, Siéyès had taken the precaution of ordering a travelling carriage to wait for him at one of the gates of the palace during the proceedings. The event soon justified that step. Bonaparte had a bad reception from the Ancients when he tried to address them; the Five Hundred mobbed him. Accounts of what followed are exasperatingly contradictory and confused. In the presence of the angry Jacobins, who continued to shout "No soldiers here," and "Outlaw him," the little General wilted and

* See note 117.

seemed to become faint. He was rescued by the grenadiers of the Republican Guard, who had accompanied him to the door of the orangery. They put him on his horse, as his soldiers had done after dragging him out of the mêlée at Arcola. From the saddle he watched through the window his brother Luciani fling off his robes of office and vacate the chair rather than put the motion for outlawry to the House. He sent soldiers into the House to rescue Luciani, who was in no special danger. Then Luciani addressed the troops, saying that assassins in English pay had attacked the General and himself in order to prevent the restoration of France. The drums began to roll. Murat at the head of a body with fixed bayonets cleared the hall. Later in the night a handful of deputies, mobilized by Luciani, confirmed the decree appointing Bonaparte, Siéyès, and Roger Ducos Consuls; Bonaparte was named First Consul.

The proceedings, it must be confessed, bear some resemblance to a put-up job, and this impression is deepened when it is remembered that Bonaparte's object was to secure election by consent rather than by force. That he had clearly foreseen the possibility of opposition is certain; he was neither the man to be cowed by a handful of politicians whose power to injure him was at the best problematical, nor to neglect consideration of the best way of defeating such opposition. No soldier ever provided more carefully against disaster. His agitation and faintness undoubtedly stimulated the boldness of the attackers; but they roused the grenadiers at the door of the Hall, in full view, to such indignation that they came running to his rescue. Thus, the soldiers waiting outside were easily persuaded that the Hall was full of Terrorists. That idea was confirmed when more soldiers were despatched to rescue Luciani, the President.

The troops, Bonaparte's men from the outset,* felt themselves affronted in his affront, and this by politicians whom every soldier regarded as his natural enemies. It was only necessary, now, to suggest that patriotic deputies were being threatened by a gang of armed traitors to remove the last scruples anybody may have felt. Bonaparte could claim that he had drawn his sword in defence of Parliamentary government (of which, the previous day, he had been appointed defender) against a tyrannical faction.

Josephine was allowed a small revenge over the Buonapartes as a reward for her good offices. She alone received from Bonaparte, on the evening of the 18th Brumaire, the news of his success and his appointment as First Consul. Consequently, Mama Letizia and her daughters had to call on Napoleone's wife to hear what had happened. Josephine received them with the utmost kindness. When Bonaparte returned from St. Cloud with Bourrienne he went straight up to her bedroom and kissed her.

* See note 118.

# BOOK III

# NAPOLEON

## CHAPTER XIV

## HER MASTER

It is a fallacy that character can be changed by circumstances; from an early age human desires are fixed and scruples determined. Her narrow escape had by no means affected Josephine's tastes; its only influence was exerted on the methods by which she sought to satisfy them. In reconstructing these methods she profited by experience. Bonaparte, she believed, had clung to her because she was a Frenchwoman of the old nobility. She guessed, with much shrewdness, that in his mind she represented the element in the new France that was least susceptible to his influence but most necessary to his design of attaching the whole nation to his person. His private desire to conquer her indifference therefore ran parallel with his public ambition. From the moment when she found herself installed in the Luxembourg as the wife of the First Consul she contrived to suggest that the victims of the Revolutionary fury were her special interest and care. Bonaparte, the illustrious General of the Republic and one-time friend of Augustin Robespierre, was nevertheless well satisfied to be the husband of a daughter of the old aristocracy and of the widow of Alexander de Beauharnais. That Alexander had presided over the Assembly and commanded one of the Revolutionary armies before shedding his blood on the guillotine was seen to be a highly advantageous combination of circumstances, since it made Josephine the representative of every element in France which could not lay claim to be represented by Bonaparte.

"The circumstances attending my marriage with Madame de Beauharnais," Napoleon stated, "put me in touch with a party whose aid was absolutely necessary to me if I wanted to carry out my scheme of coalition, one of the strongest points in my system of government and one of its chief characteristics. Without my wife's help I could never have had any friendly intercourse with this party."

Josephine's drawing-room at the Luxembourg soon filled with men and women of the old aristocracy. These people were by no means of one mind, but they had in common their sufferings and their hopes. All, in greater or less degree, had endured hardship, and all were concerned to recover as much as possible of what they had lost. Bonaparte's wife was allowed to assure them that her husband would protect them and that he might, in the not very distant future, recover for them a part at least of their lost possessions. For some of the returned emigrants this was enough; they attached themselves to the First Consul. But there were others of tougher fibre who said frankly that they awaited the day when the King would return to France. These latter were mostly the bearers of the great names. Madame Bonaparte, who, when she was the bride of Alexander de Beauharnais, had desired so ardently to know them, found them irresistibly attractive. It did not take them long to discover her feelings. Aristocracy expects to be courted. They persuaded her that the Consulate was merely another of the expedients by which a discredited Republicanism was staving off the inevitable restoration of the monarchy. "You are one of us," whispered her new friends. "Use your influence with your husband to induce him to hasten the happy day."

Josephine was not proof against flattery of this kind.

BONAPARTE.
*From the sketch by* DAVID.

Besides, she would have been a much less astute woman than she was had she remained insensible to the fact that a restoration of the monarchy by Bonaparte would rescue her from many dangers. She was well aware that she had not heard the last of the vendetta. If Bonaparte mounted the throne, her failure to provide him with an heir would inevitably be seized on by his family as a reason for getting rid of her. One day she ventured to tell her husband that she had received a promise from the Comte d'Artois, Louis XVI.'s youngest brother, to make him High Constable of France and to erect a statue in his honour if he would attach himself to the Bourbons.

The First Consul gazed at her.

"Tell him," he said, "that he will have to kill me first and use my body as the pedestal."

This offer was soon followed by a letter from the elder of the surviving brothers of Louis XVI., in which Bonaparte was bidden, on condition of playing the part of General Monk, to name his own terms. Both Josephine and Hortense, to whom he imparted the news, urged that, even if it was impossible to comply immediately, a refusal should not be sent.*

"These obstinate women are quite crazy," he remarked. "The Faubourg St. Germain has turned their heads. They both want to act as guardian angel to the Royalists. But they won't hurt me. I bear them no ill-will."†

Her relations with the Faubourg St. Germain had the immediate advantage of widening the social gulf between Josephine and the Buonapartes. The Corsicans, who were now as eager as their brother to be "absolutely French," found themselves occasionally in the presence of great, if shabby, dames, who spoke respectfully of

* See note 119. † See note 120.

the First Consul's wife as the daughter-in-law of the venerable Marquis de Beauharnais. In the drawing-room of the Luxembourg their Italian accents were as constant a source of vexation to them as were Josephine's patronizing airs. As incapable as she of understanding Bonaparte's profound policy, they, too, foresaw a quick return to the old order, and their hatred of her increased. Was she, with her smart friends, to reap all that they had sown? What positions were they likely to occupy in the new Versailles?

The embers of their wrath were kindled to fresh flame when they learned that rumours damaging to their reputations, which the police were doing nothing to check, were circulating in the Faubourg. These rumours suggested, among other things, that Luciani was abusing the position of Minister of the Interior, to which his brother had appointed him, by imitating the methods of Barras. Mama Letizia was unable to contain herself.* She visited Napoleon at the Luxembourg and, in her daughter-in-law's presence, declared that she would not rest until the owners of the slanderous tongues were punished. The old woman's aspect was frightfully threatening. Her dark eyes glowed, her thin lips were drawn back on her long teeth. Corsican motherhood discovered resources of scorn and contempt which, although no names except that of Fouché, the Minister of Police, was mentioned, made Josephine quake.

"I will tell Fouché to take action against the offenders," Napoleon promised.

Madame Letizia gathered up her decorous skirts. She turned to her daughter-in-law.

"And you," she asked, in withering tones, "will you warn your friend Fouché that I am quite capable of

* See note 121.

making anybody who slanders my sons repent of their folly?"

The effect of these rumours, which were well founded, was to cause the Buonapartes to make a great outcry about their Republican principles. Luciani, always bolder than the others, recalled in rather a sinister way the step he had taken during the Terror of changing his name to Brutus by publishing a pamphlet in which he compared Napoleone to Julius Cæsar and Cromwell. He made a point, too, of recalling the fact that on the 18th Brumaire it was he who had saved his brother by promising the soldiers that if ever Napoleone lifted a finger against the Republic he would be the first to plunge a dagger in his heart. As propaganda among the Republicans this was quite as useful as Josephine's wooing of the Royalists. The First Consul held himself aloof and invited France to say whether or not it approved of his accession to power. Armed with an all but unanimous vote in his favour, he transferred his home from the Luxembourg to the Tuileries, a move disconcerting alike to Republicans and Royalists, but in accord, as he knew, with the wishes of the nation. The occasion was marked by a review of the troops. Josephine and the Buonapartes witnessed the spectacle from windows of the palace and saw Bonaparte receive once more the homage of his veterans of Italy. As the colours of Lodi and Rivoli and Arcole, tattered rags on their blackened staves, were borne by, the General was observed to pull off his hat and bow his head.

It was not to be expected that Josephine in her present frame of mind would welcome the move from the palace of the Directors to that of the Kings. But the lamentations which she uttered on entering the Tuileries for the first time were so evidently designed to reach the Faubourg St. Germain that they made an unfavourable

impression. She saw Marie Antoinette everywhere, and declared that she could never be happy in the apartments from which the Queen had been dragged to her death.* As the Consulate was obviously not yet solidly established and as there were moments when, in Paris, at any rate, its foundations seemed far from secure, many shrewd folk followed Madame Bonaparte's example. It was as well to keep a line of retreat open. When the fact could no longer be hidden that Bonaparte had a new war on his hands, anxieties and hopes were quickened. Suppose he were beaten? By the sword he had risen; by the sword he might fall. Royalists and Republicans prepared once more to spring at each other's throats. It was necessary in these circumstances, if not to back your fancy, at least to establish relations with one or other of the parties. If, like Josephine, you leaned towards the Royalists, you made your peace with the Faubourg; if, on the contrary, like Luciani and the Buonapartes, your instincts led you into the Republican camp, you invoked the spirit of Robespierre. The singular spectacle was presented of a capital far more deeply concerned with its private quarrels than with the national emergency. Bonaparte had kept his promise to quell the factions, but they liked him no better for it, and heaved a sigh of relief when he betook himself to the Alps.

Once his back was turned a kind of skirmishing began. Josephine was wise enough not to play any open part. She fell back, until the issue of the campaign should be decided, on her old, dissolute friends, whose politics nobody could take seriously. In spite of Bonaparte's orders to the contrary, Madame Tallien and her companions were made welcome at the Tuileries. She kept in close touch, too, with her husband's Ministers, Fouché and Talleyrand, and was well posted in the

* See note 122.

news. Luciani was far less discreet, and soon got himself talked about as a possible successor to his brother.* This remarkable defection of the Buonapartes from Napoleone, which afforded the highest degree of satisfaction in the Faubourg, caused the Government a good deal of anxiety. It terrified Josephine, who could be under no illusion about its meaning. So far as she was concerned, her fear of Luciani fed the hatred she bore him and stimulated her to keep the closest possible watch on his movements. She began to ask herself whether, in the event of Bonaparte's defeat, the Royalists would really be able to spring into the saddle. In this mood of hesitation she found it impossible to write to her husband. The usual rebukes soon arrived from the seat of war.

"Torre di Garofolo,
"*May* 16, 1800.

". . . I have not received a single letter from you; that is not well. I have written you by every courier. . . . My very kindest regards to you, my good little Josephine, and to all who belong to you."

It seemed that, after all, Bonaparte was very much alive. His next letter, written after he had transported his army across the Great St. Bernard, hinted at victory.

"The enemy is thoroughly demoralized; he cannot even yet understand us. I hope within ten days to be in the arms of my Josephine, who is always very good when she is not crying and not flirting. . . . Accept a thousand tender thoughts."

A fortnight later the news of the Battle of Marengo recalled Paris to the heel of her master. No sooner was Bonaparte home again than Josephine, with the memory of her fright quick in her mind, told him all that she had discovered about Luciani. She was not the only

* See note 123.

informer, but her testimony carried the most weight. Luciani was summoned to the palace and dismissed from his post as Minister, in which he had already made a fortune. He was then appointed Ambassador to Spain.

He had been let down easily, but the resentment of the Buonapartes was not lessened on that account. Indignation gave them courage to tell Napoleone exactly what they thought of him, and to remind him that, whereas, in their opinion, Luciani had saved him from ruin in the orangery of St. Cloud only a year before, this wife, whose slanders were the cause of this trouble, had covered his name with the infamy of her infidelities. Mama Letizia choked with exasperation; Elisa, ever thrifty of her tears, broke down and wept.* In hurricanes of words Paolina and Carlotta defended Luciani and denounced Josephine. Even Giuseppe and Luigi showed themselves deeply mortified. But they could not move the First Consul.

The lesson was not lost on Josephine. It was driven home when, a short time after Luciani's departure for Spain, the Royalists attempted to blow up Bonaparte's carriage by means of an infernal machine. She perceived the danger to herself of entanglements with the Faubourg St. Germain and abandoned precipitately her efforts on behalf of the Bourbons. Even her plans to marry Hortense to some rich nobleman were relinquished.† She could not afford now to give the Buonapartes the smallest opportunity of attacking her. In a kind of bewilderment she saw her husband complete the tremendous tasks to which he had set his hand. The shattered finances were restored; the corruption of Government purged; social life reorganized on a secure basis; equal and just laws promulgated; religion once more established; above all, peace secured on

* See note 124.

† See note 125.

honourable and advantageous terms with every enemy. France had given herself to Bonaparte to do with as he might elect. Apart from him there was nothing to hope for. To be able to further his policy, gratify his wishes, minister to his needs—these were now his wife's sole ambitions. She confessed herself conquered at last and even submitted to the rigorous censorship of her acquaintances which he imposed on her. Madame Tallien found the gates of the Tuileries closed. Josephine did not pretend to understand her husband; on the principle that the success of honest men is the bewilderment of rogues, she remained astonished that a person who interested her so little should be able to interest other people so much. But she knew him as a wholly exceptional being over whom she was able to exercise a quite unaccountable fascination. She saw very little of him—even dinner at the Tuileries only lasted ten minutes as a rule—but she studied him with a care and detachment that once for all absolves her from the charge of stupidity.

"People do not know Napoleon," she stated. "He is quick-tempered but kind."

His opinion of her was not less flattering:

"Josephine possessed an exact knowledge of all the intricacies of my character and with it an admirable tact."

## CHAPTER XV

## A SCANDALOUS STORY

Among the intricacies of Bonaparte's character was his family instinct. He might quarrel with his brothers and sisters, but the more he quarrelled the quicker he forgave. Then his anger tended to turn against those who had roused it. Josephine expected to hear more about the disgrace of Luciani, and she was not disappointed. In the tones of raillery which he usually adopted when paying off a score, her husband told her that his brother was busy arranging a marriage between himself and the daughter of the King of Spain.

She had the sense to see the joke, but it disturbed her. For what was spoken lightly to-day might be spoken in earnest to-morrow. At thirty-seven, after five years of married life, she had all but abandoned the hope of giving her husband an heir. Her mind, bold and agile in the face of danger, conceived the idea of turning Luciani into her friend by marrying Hortense to him.*

This plan had much to recommend it. Luciani was a widower, whose first wife, though an excellent woman, had been illiterate. He had proved a good husband, but he had certainly not remained insensible to the drawbacks attending his marriage. Ambition demanded that his second choice should be made in a different rank of society. The lovely young daughter of Alexander de Beauharnais was a prize in any case, but the fact that she was also the First Consul's stepdaughter made her the greatest prize in France. As her husband, Luciani could count on enjoying his brother's confidence in

* See note 126.

double measure, and might confidently hope to see his children become Bonaparte's heirs. The advantages likely to accrue to Josephine were not less substantial. The strongest advocate of her divorce would be turned into its strongest opponent.

This reasoning, however, left out of account the character of Luciani. Bonaparte's younger brother possessed a personality scarcely less interesting than his own. From his earliest days he had been a rebel, violent, arrogant, greedy, yet with a most unexpected trait of nobility and with a dauntless courage. His nobility had shown itself in the emotional sincerity which had characterized all his relations with his wife. It had inspired his deep contempt for Josephine, but it was unable to comprehend in its ambit the superiority of Napoleone. Luciani had the singular misfortune to be a genius doomed to perpetual association with one of the greatest minds of human story. His true and vivid intellect, which in almost any other circumstances would have distinguished him among men, was warped by contact with the spirit of his brother. In that profound simplicity his abilities strayed and lost themselves, so that, while he understood all, he achieved nothing. A sense of personal outrage, much stronger than injured vanity, darkened his thought and fired his resentment. He began to find his only satisfaction in opposition to Napoleone. That attitude possessed, he persuaded himself, its complete justification in the events of the 18th Brumaire. Napoleone on this day must have been ruined had not he, Luciani, come to the rescue. Napoleone, therefore, owed him everything; but jealousy had killed gratitude. This unscrupulous robber of the public treasury, this barefaced plotter against his brother's power and even life, flattered himself that he had been sent to Spain solely because it was expedient to get rid of a dangerous rival.

Josephine's plan of reconciliation aroused to a common repudiation all that was good and all that was bad in Luciani's character. To begin with, he was violently in love with Madame Jouberthon, whom he married after she bore him a son. Then he could not forget that it was Josephine who had been chiefly instrumental in poisoning his brother's mind against him. His anger, feeding on his grievance, began to quicken. Josephine, he told himself, would not have dared to make such a proposal without Napoleone's consent. This, therefore, was another of his brother's plans to circumvent him. They might keep their live bait. Then a still more sinister idea struck him. His brother had always shown great affection for Hortense. Had it become necessary to find a father for Napoleone's child?*

Anger is incapable of discretion. Luciani, who had amassed enormous wealth in Spain in a few months by the sale of French interests, whispered his slander in many ears. It reached Josephine, who adroitly countered it by announcing that Luciani had asked for Hortense and been refused. She had no intention of abandoning her plan merely because her enemy had proved intractable. Finding Luciani unwilling, she turned to Luigi. This young fellow was made aware of the good fortune in store for him; but he, too, showed reluctance.

Josephine now appealed to Bonaparte to use compulsion. Napoleone found himself in the position he disliked and feared most. He knew, as well as anybody else, what was being whispered, and felt some sympathy for Luigi. Moreover, he experienced the utmost reluctance to distress his mother and sisters. He had, too, a father's feeling for the dyspeptic lad whose mind he had filled with his visions and whose digestion, when he was sharing his wretched lieutenant's pay with him,

* See note 127.

he had ruined by his cookery. Fathers are shy of interfering in their sons' love affairs. He fell back, therefore, on the flirtation which Hortense was conducting with his aide-de-camp, Duroc,* of whom he was exceedingly fond. Why not pacify everybody by marrying the couple? He made the suggestion hopefully, but quickly discovered that Josephine regarded it as an insult. Was her daughter to be fobbed off on a nobody? In the manner which experience had shown her to be effective, Madame Bonaparte developed the injury to her feelings. Hortense, she complained, was all that she possessed. On the threshold of womanhood, the poor girl had been robbed of her reputation by the Buonapartes. Could her husband not see that the only possible way of discounting Luciani's slander was to marry Hortense to Luigi?

"But Hortense doesn't wish to marry him."

"I'll answer for her."

Napoleone did what other husbands, similarly situated, usually do in such circumstances. He repeated his wife's arguments to his own people, who instantly recognized their source. A violent quarrel ensued.† The harassed husband accused his mother and sisters of being unjust to his wife, and then, later, accused his wife of being unjust to his mother and sisters. Josephine perceived that the crisis of the encounter had arrived and brought the whole of her forces into play. She dried her tears and passed in a twinkling from complaint to persuasion. She teased, she coaxed, she petted, and she got the promise she asked for.

The weakest of the Buonapartes now found himself matched against the strongest. Luigi, who bore Josephine a personal grudge for having snatched her cousin Emilie de Beauharnais away from him, decided to resist, and tried to mobilize his family. To his sorrow he discovered

* See note 128.

† See note 129.

that the Buonapartes, though boiling with hate, were unwilling to prejudice their own chances. He found himself isolated, without resource other than an appeal to Napoleone. This was rejected with the harshness which generally accompanies action taken against a better judgment. He was told that he must marry Hortense or quit France.* The Buonaparte instinct asserted itself against the Buonaparte vanity. Wilting under the sting of Luciani's scandal, of which he was now destined to become the ridiculous victim, the young man began to pay his addresses to Hortense.

She was ready to receive them, for her mother had just enlightened her about the dangers of their situation.

"Only your marriage to Louis," said Josephine, "can tighten and strengthen those bonds on which depends my happiness."

A few days later the First Consul remarked to his stepdaughter:

"Well, so Louis is courting you, is he? That ought to suit you and your mother too."†

The time had come to prove to the Buonapartes that spiteful tongues sometimes serve the interests they attack. Josephine, who had recognized instantly the potential value of Luciani's scandalous story, now set about realizing its value. To the surprise of all her friends, she spent her days in continuous weeping and steadily refused to name a date for the wedding. Her tears were so irrepressible that the public heard about them. What could it mean? Surely Madame Bonaparte was not sorry to see her daughter married to her brother-in-law! Luciani's story supplied the key to the mystery.

Writhing with shame, Luigi was dragged to the altar on January 4, 1802. He tried to creep up the private

* See note 130. † See note 131.

staircase to the apartments of state, but was kicked up the main staircase by the Consul. He had already begun to show symptoms of an anxiety neurosis, and his mother-in-law's weeping, which continued unceasingly throughout the marriage ceremony, completed his demoralization. He would not look at his bride, who soon joined her tears to those of her mother. After the civil ceremony the nuptial blessing was given by Cardinal Capara. Carlotta, who had married Murat a little earlier, received the nuptial blessing with her husband at the same time, and their happiness intensified the dejected looks of Luigi and Hortense. Bonaparte, who liked a seasonable exhibition of cheerfulness at a wedding, surveyed the scene with uneasy disapproval. Four days later he took Josephine away to Lyons to witness his election as President of the new Cisalpine (Italian) Republic.

Madame Bonaparte could now afford to enjoy herself, especially as the news she received from Paris assured her that Luigi, in his bitterness, was playing her game. He had begun to exhibit a morose temper, and had refused flatly to bring his wife to live at the Tuileries. His only concern was to discount the idea that his firstborn would be Napoleone's child. A few months later Hortense, now pregnant, told her mother that when she had suggested that her baby might be born on October 1, her husband had declared:

"If such a thing happened I would never see you again as long as I lived."*

Luigi no longer suspected his wife. What was wrong was that he could not escape from the horrible idea that everybody was laughing at him. "It's on account of what people will say!" his tortured mind kept on reiterating. His child, a son, whom he hastened to call "Charles," after his father, was not born until October

* See note 132.

10. But this fact counted for nothing in a public mind determined to believe what it wanted to believe.

Josephine was present at her daughter's confinement, and had the support of Luigi throughout the ordeal. At the moment of the child's birth the midwife ventured to remark: *"Voilà notre Dauphin."* Luigi scowled her to silence; yet the poor fellow was so kind and attentive that his mother-in-law began to think he must wish to be reconciled to her. But the gloom which fastened again on his brow as soon as the emergency was over warned her not to be sanguine. The next day Napoleone called to congratulate his brother and to announce very unseasonably that he had decided to bestow his own name as well as that of their father on the baby. His cheerful spirits, which contrasted so sharply with his brother's melancholy, were the subject of comment, and prepared everybody for the proposal to adopt the child, which he made a few days later.

"Never," said Luigi.

The matter, to Josephine's great annoyance, was not persisted in. Luigi took counsel with his brothers Giuseppe and Luciani, and they agreed among themselves to resist to the last any attempt to tamper with what they conceived to be their right of succession. Even these hardened spirits were appalled at the ascendancy which Josephine had evidently obtained over her husband. Had the man no sense of decency to restrain him from projects every one of which was calculated to fasten on himself the paternity of his brother's child? The reflection that their own tongues had wrought the mischief imparted, no doubt, an added bitterness to these discussions.

It must be accounted strange that Bonaparte was so little concerned to defend himself against the charge of having debauched his stepdaughter. Some remarks

which he addressed to her after the death of her child indicate the state of his mind.

"People,"* he told her, "have no confidence in my brothers, who are all ambitious for that matter. Eugène does not bear my name, and, in spite of my efforts to restore peace, after me there will be complete anarchy. A son of mine can alone set things right, and, if I have not yet divorced, my affection for your mother has alone prevented me, for all France is anxious that I should do it. This was obvious at the time of your son's death.

"Everyone believed that I was his father. You know how absurd such a supposition was. Well, it was impossible to prevent all Europe thinking the child mine."

Hortense made a movement of surprise at this remarkable disclosure. Bonaparte continued:

"The public did not think the worse of you; you are generally esteemed. But they believed it."

He paused for a moment, and then added:

"It was, perhaps, just as well to have people think it, and so I looked upon his death as a calamity."

His reluctance to divorce his wife was not, however, the only reason why Bonaparte was willing to take advantage of the scandalous story. There existed in his mind a fear, diligently fostered by Josephine, that he was incapable of fatherhood. Both pride and policy suggested the wisdom of accepting what an impish Fate had bestowed. But he was not comfortable in contemplating the affair. Second thoughts convinced him that Luigi's position, unpleasant as it might be, was preferable to his own. The spectacle of paternity is apt to awaken bitter reflections in the minds of childless men, and especially of those whose wives have proved their capacity for motherhood. He was seized by a desire to know if it was really true that he could not beget

* See note 133.

children. To her consternation, Josephine discovered that, in attempting to satisfy her husband's political aims, she had whetted his personal desires. The danger lay in his finding a mistress of whose fidelity he could be sure. She applied to Fouché to keep her informed about all his doings, and, in addition, employed spies of her own. The moment she heard that he was casting eyes at a woman she took the field against him.

Her study of his character served her admirably on these occasions. There was an element of dignity in Bonaparte's nature to which he attached the greatest importance and on which he was accustomed to fall back in moments of crisis. He was as sensitive to a threat directed against this element as to a threat directed in the field against his lines of communication. Consequently, if he heard his name coupled in a frivolous way with that of any particular woman, he soon dropped her. Josephine, adopting his own strategy, invariably sought him out at his weakest point. She wept, she swooned, she screamed, until her lamentable plight became the sole topic and furnished an irresistible occasion of ribaldry.* It was on this ribaldry that she counted.

* See note 134.

## CHAPTER XVI

## A FAMILY FEUD

Luigi held the trumps in the shape of his infant, and was determined not to part with it. His behaviour, in face of Napoleone's standing threat to adopt the child, resembled that of a frightened tabby scurrying about with her kittens in her mouth.

He found his brothers and sisters much readier to help him now than they had been at the time of his wedding, for the bold use which Josephine had made of Luciani's slander had convinced them that his cause was theirs also. If Napoleone was allowed to adopt the baby, where did they come in?

Not only Giuseppe and Luciani, but also Mama Letizia and the girls urged Luigi to cling to his rights. "Do not forget," they exhorted him, "that little Charles is Josephine's grandson; once he falls into her clutches we shall cease to count." Luigi had no doubt of it. He swore that they might rely on him, and they, in their turn, promised to submit no longer to Napoleone's dictation. Giuseppe had just bought the excellent estate of Mortefontaine. He proposed that they should retire there for a time, and, since Luciani's new seat of Plessis was close at hand, this was agreed to. In the country the vendetta against Josephine was reaffirmed and the decision taken to make Napoleone aware that in the Buonaparte family his position remained that of a younger son. Giuseppe found in this belated recognition of his birthright a satisfaction for which he was hungry. A soft fellow, good looking and easygoing, he had his pride. Had not Providence placed him at the head of

his family? A few days later the First Consul and his wife were invited to dinner. Just before the meal began Giuseppe announced in tones of authority that it was his purpose to give his arm to their mother and to seat her on his right hand at the head of the table, while the position on his left had been reserved for Josephine. An angry flush was observed in Napoleone's cheeks. Muttering that his wife was the first woman in France, he gave her his arm and led her into the dining-room. He seated her next to himself, and throughout the meal spoke chiefly to her and to Madame de Rémusat.*

The incident was trivial enough, but it produced violent reactions in Bonaparte's mind. Once again he had encountered legitimacy, the device by which time discounts talent. In Giuseppe's patronizing smile, as in Luigi's sullen eyes, he read the challenge of the same divine right which the Bourbons were invoking against him. "Would you steal my birthright, my son, my throne?" There is nothing more exasperating than a conviction of rectitude which one cannot defend. He might tell the Bourbons that the throne of France belonged, not to God, but to the French people; could he deny, in the same terms, the laws of primogeniture and fatherhood?

Josephine was bothered by none of these difficulties. Was not the Buonaparte game as plain as a pikestaff? But let them take care. If they had Luigi, she had Hortense. Any kindly feelings she may have cherished for her son-in-law had withered since he sent Bonaparte a letter advising him to divorce her and get children of his own,† and her hatred of Luciani had just been sharpened by his sneering advice in her own drawing-room to hurry up and, somehow or other, "give us a little Cæsar."‡ She repeated this ill-advised remark to

* See note 135. † See note 136. ‡ See note 137.

Bonaparte, adding that everybody had taken it as a hint to her to replace her impotent husband by a lover. That piece of information prepared the way for another: Luigi was going to Italy to spend the winter and meant to take his wife and his infant with him.*

Bonaparte flew into a passion. "What! Did Luigi wish to kill the baby?" He sent for his brother and, as head of the State, forbade him, "on account of the extreme youth of a child who is important to all France," to carry out his plan. Luigi, violent, morose, and tearful by turns, was beaten finally to his knees by the support which Hortense gave to his adversary. The mother confessed with streaming eyes that the prospect of taking her baby across the Alps was terrifying to her. It was soon decided that Hortense's place was in Paris with her child; Luigi was therefore under the necessity of departing alone. His back was scarcely turned before Hortense told her stepfather that she had been forbidden to pass a single night under his roof.

"Write him," shouted the indignant Bonaparte, "that a husband cannot separate a daughter from her mother."

Paris enjoyed the joke. To the great comfort of his mother and grandmother, little Napoleon-Charles was brought every day to see his illustrious uncle, and this continued for nearly a year, until Luigi's belated return.

"The Consul," says Hortense,† "made him sit in the middle of the table and let him touch everything. He gave him wine and coffee; and though he frequently made the child cry by pinching his cheek or by hugging him too hard, he had known how to win his affection and could not come into the room without my son stretching out his arms towards him. This seemed to please my stepfather, and even when he was most pre-occupied his sombre face would brighten."

* See note 138. † See note 139.

The battle seemed to be half won, but the rupture of the peace with England in May, 1803, the menacing attitude of the Continental Powers, and notably of Austria and Russia, which arose out of that event, and the plots against Bonaparte's life, which began to be talked about, constituted a series of checks which gave Josephine legitimate grounds of anxiety. Fresh wars, to say nothing of fresh plots, were bound to place the Consul's life in jeopardy. If he fell, who was to succeed him?

Luigi came home. His hostile manner towards Hortense suggested at once that he suspected her of being unfaithful to him. He told his brothers that, as he could no longer endure the ridiculous position he occupied, he had made up his mind to leave his wife.* So signal a victory for Josephine was not to be borne, especially at a moment when the hopes of the family were reviving. Giuseppe and Luciani urged the weakling to pluck up courage and assert himself, nor did they hesitate to apply to their enemy for help. It was clear that, whatever her private feelings might be, Josephine could not in the circumstances refuse to assist in bringing about a reconciliation between husband and wife. The plan succeeded; Luigi decided to rejoin his regiment at Compiègne and to take his wife and child with him. He was promptly, in order to prevent him from leaving Paris, appointed brigadier-general and made a member of the Conseil d'État.

"I have never," Hortense says, "seen a man so worried."

Bonaparte, however, was too busy forming his army at Boulogne to care much just then what his brother did, and so, in spite of his promotions, Luigi was allowed to depart with his family. The gesture was correctly inter-

* See note 140.

preted as an announcement by the brothers Buonaparte that the Consul's heirs were themselves—Giuseppe, Luciani, and Luigi, in that order. So dismal a prospect, in the troubled state of Europe, aroused a good deal of grumbling. His supporters asked Bonaparte if he believed that France would accept his brothers, and told him plainly that if anything happened to him the Bourbons would be recalled. This calamity, they said, they were anxious to avoid. They urged him to divorce Josephine.

He began to consider the matter seriously, and allowed his family to know that he was considering it. They were round him in an instant, full of plans for his happiness, forgetful of their anger, hopeful, greedy, scandalous. Now, they urged, was the time for him to consolidate his power and escape from the danger of a fresh war by marrying a king's daughter. Josephine, feeling the ground sliding under her feet, gave way to despair. But her tears watered the desert; her husband, weary of the loss of rest occasioned by lamentations that never ceased, told her that he had decided to have a bedroom of his own.* The Buonapartes could not contain themselves. "She is lost," they assured one another. They began to haunt the Tuileries, anxious not to miss a moment of the spectacle of their enemy's humiliation. So many sneers embellished their talk that one evening Josephine was driven to remind them that she was the mother of two children.†

"But you were a young woman then," remarked Elisa.

Bonaparte overheard her.

"Sometimes it is kinder not to speak the truth," he declared.

People now began to say what they thought about

* See note 141. † See note 142.

Madame Bonaparte. Her untidiness, her ignorance, her petulance, above all, her extravagance, were mercilessly exposed. How much had she not spent on this or that frock, on her dress made of feathers, for example, each one of them tipped with silver, or her dress that a whole corps of women had covered with fresh rose-leaves before she stepped out of her bedroom. She possessed six hundred hats; her diamonds and her debts were accumulating at an incredible rate.* As for her looks, she had lost them long ago. The bitter tongues, unloosed by Bonaparte's indifference, discovered all her weakness. How little these people guessed her resources of strength and courage!

But enlightenment was at hand. There are a very few people of whom it can be said truly that their luck is never out. Just when Josephine's prospects looked blackest, two events occurred which, had she ordered them, could not more effectively have served her interests. The first of these was Luciani's secret marriage to Madame Jouberthon, the second the execution of the Duc d'Enghien.

Luciani had been living with Madame Jouberthon for nearly a year, and she had borne him a son,† when, most inopportunely, her husband died. He decided to marry her and so legitimize the child. As Giuseppe had only daughters, and as his own first wife had only borne daughters, Madame Jouberthon's bastard would thus become his heir.

Napoleone could scarcely believe his ears; Luciani's heir, assuming that he was unable to adopt Luigi's son, would be his heir also.

"What!" he shouted. "Would you force your bastard on me as my successor?"

That was the intention; the Buonapartes could not

* See note 143. † See note 144.

hide their satisfaction in having got hold of a rival to Josephine's grandson, and Luigi seemed as jubilant as any of them, in spite of the fact that it was his own boy who was to be displaced. Napoleone forbade the marriage and even issued orders to the mayor of the 10th Arrondissement to refuse to celebrate it, while Luciani was compelled to listen to some plain speaking about his own and Madame Jouberthon's morals. The smouldering wrath of the younger brother became, in an instant, a roaring furnace. By way of retaliation he named Josephine—quite correctly—as the author of the slander that he had poisoned his first wife. Could the husband of such a woman afford to throw any stones? Napoleone's temper mounted as quickly as Luciani's. He snatched a gold snuff-box, in the lid of which was a miniature of Josephine, from his pocket.

"Do you see this box?" he shouted. "I'll smash you as I smash it."

He hurled the box across the floor. The picture of Josephine fell out and was broken.

"Apparently it is only your wife you will smash," sneered Luciani.*

The news of the secret wedding, which took place at Chaumont in October, 1803, produced a violent commotion. Giuseppe solemnly gave his consent to it. "Joseph is the eldest of us all," said Luigi, "where he leads, I must follow." Napoleone, shouting that he was sorry he was not a bastard, ordered Luciani to divorce his wife or leave France. In spite of this threat, Mama Letizia, who had also given her consent, advised Luciani to resist, and gave Napoleone a sharp piece of her mind.

"Ah," replied he, "I see that I am the only member of our family who may be importuned to break up his home?"

* See note 145.

Luciani was told to go. Mama Letizia announced her determination to go with him. Hysterical with exasperation, Bonaparte came to his wife's room and flung himself down on a couch. Josephine's cool fingers caressed his brow while her lips pleaded softly for her routed enemies. Her husband raised his head and looked at her.

"You are a good woman," he was heard to say, "to plead for Lucien."*

The execution of the Duc d'Enghien completed the salvation which Luciani's defiance had begun. This young man, a Bourbon Condé and a near relative of the Royal House of France, had gone to live close to the French frontier, in Baden, to be ready, as he confessed, to march with other *émigrés* into France if called upon to do so by his "rightful King," Louis XVIII. D'Enghien did not, apparently, know that a plot to murder Bonaparte had been hatched in England and that a number of assassins, led by the Vendéan, Georges Cadoudal, had reached Paris.

The discovery of the plot and of the fact that Generals Pichegru and Moreau were associated with it threw the First Consul into one of those transports of rage which, in his case, usually hid a maturing purpose. Bonaparte had decided to mount the throne, but knew that, when he announced his intention, the old Republicans would be alienated from him unless he could show them good reason for the step. What better reason could he show than that the Bourbons had attempted to land in France and march on Paris? He had discovered, by questioning some of the arrested assassins, that the Bourbons actually intended this bold move. He decided to arrest any of them who might cross the Channel from England and have them put to death as traitors in British pay.

* See note 146.

Réal, who had succeeded Fouché as Chief of Police, was ordered to have the coast patrolled. But no arrest was made, though the Duc de Berri, son of the Comte d'Artois, did land for a short time.

This was disappointing, in so much that a second royal execution in Paris must have quenched, once for all, the idea that Bonaparte was out of sympathy with the authors of the first royal execution. The First Consul heard, therefore, with the greatest excitement that the Duc d'Enghien was in Baden and that Dumouriez was with him.*

It was not Dumouriez, but a man named Thumery. But the mistake was discovered too late. Acting on the advice of Talleyrand and Fouché, Bonaparte violated German territory, seized the young duke, brought him to Paris and had him tried and shot as a traitor. He had dipped his hands in royal blood. There was not a princeling in Europe who would not at that moment have declined to ally himself by marriage with such a man.† Bonaparte was about to take his seat on the throne of France; could he marry a commoner? Divorce was out of the question.

Josephine, to her honour, pleaded that the life of the young duke might be spared. She proclaimed his death as "Bonaparte's first fault," lamented it openly, and by her entreaties rescued other members of the Royalist party who seemed likely to share d'Enghien's fate. In consequence, the Royalists blessed her as whole-heartedly as the Republicans applauded Bonaparte. That was exactly what he wanted.

* See note 147.

† See note 148.

## CHAPTER XVII

## TRIUMPH

JOSEPHINE's position was very strong. Her enemies were scattered, for Luciani and Mama Letizia had departed for Rome, to which city Paolina, now the wife of Prince Borghese,* had also gone; her husband was again at her side. The time had come to deal with Luigi.

Two months after the execution of the Duc d'Enghien, the Senate, in conferring on Napoleon the title of Emperor of the French, gave him the right to adopt the children and grandchildren of his brothers after they had reached the age of eighteen, and to prescribe meanwhile the manner in which French princes were to be brought up. The new dynasty included Joseph Bonaparte and his children and Louis Bonaparte and his children, a sop to Giuseppe and Luigi which, in view of the right of adoption, was worthless. Elisa, Paolina, and Carlotta were so angry that their names had been omitted that the new Emperor remarked:†

"Really, if one listened to my sisters, one would believe that I had robbed my family of the heritage of the late King, our father."

On May 18, 1804, Cambacérès, the Second Consul, came to St. Cloud to convey officially to Napoleon the news of his accession to the throne. Having addressed Napoleon, he proceeded to Josephine's apartment:

"Madame," he said to her, "the Senate has still an agreeable duty to perform, that of offering to your Imperial Majesty the homage of the French people. Yes, madame, France makes

* See note 149. † See note 150.

known the good you are never tired of doing. It says that, always accessible to the unfortunate, you never exercise your influence over the head of the State save to console their misery and that, to the pleasure of obliging them, your Majesty adds that amiable delicacy which makes gratitude sweeter and the benefit more precious. This happy disposition is a sure token that the name of the Empress Josephine will be the signal of consolation and hope, and, as the virtues of Napoleon will always serve as an example to his successors to teach them the art of governing nations, so the undying memory of your kindness will teach their august companions that the art of drying tears is the surest way of ruling over men's hearts. . . ."

This tactful reference to Josephine's behaviour after the execution of the Duc d'Enghien won the worthy man a gracious smile. The new Empress, considering the difficulty of her position, carried herself wonderfully well and made a favourable impression. But it was observed that she looked rather sad. Was she thinking of the prophecy of the Carib woman, the first half of which had now been fulfilled?

The Buonaparte family woke up to the realization that they were all Napoleone's subjects and that Josephine was about to look down upon them from a throne. So great was their fury that, even with sadly reduced forces, they decided to take the field again. The plan of campaign was no longer the same. It was useless at the moment to press for a divorce; all that could be hoped for was to prevent the coronation of Josephine.*

That hope was not entirely illusory. The Empire, in its earliest form, was little more than a crowned republic, and the position of the Emperor consequently that of a Chief Magistrate. There were many reasons against the extension of such a status to Napoleon's wife. Josephine, it was felt, might properly be given the courtesy title of Empress, but ought to remain, in the eyes of the law,

* See note 151.

plain Madame Bonaparte. This was the view of the whole Republican faction and, for very different reasons, of most of the Royalists. Napoleon himself may have leaned to it for a short time since he discussed the subject, but the intervention of his brothers and sisters aroused once more the feelings which his encounter with Luciani had provoked. He saw only too clearly that they were pursuing their vendetta without the slightest regard to the welfare of the State, and that their sole object was to humiliate his wife. This view received, daily, confirmation from exhibitions of malice and from complaints. Giuseppe refused to recognize his brother's new status and continued to speak of him as "Consul."* Elisa and Carlotta declared that they would not attend Josephine during the coronation ceremony.† Mama Letizia, from her retreat, let her son know that she had no intention of returning to Paris to witness the triumph of her enemy.

It was natural that Napoleon should take Josephine's part against enemies at once so greedy and so unscrupulous. His letters to her from the Camp of Boulogne show that he continued to regard her with warm affection: "*Je te couvre de baisers*. . . . I am longing to see you. You are always necessary to my happiness."

She went to Aix-la-Chapelle to take the waters, in a last vain hope that these might make her fertile.

"I have had no letter from you for several days," wrote Napoleon, "yet I should be more comfortable if I knew that the waters were efficacious and how you spend your time. During the past week I have been at Ostend. The day after to-morrow I shall be at Boulogne for a somewhat special fête. Advise me by the courier what you intend to do and how soon you expect to end your baths. I am very well satisfied with the army and the flotillas [for the invasion of England]. Eugène

* See note 152. † See note 153.

is still at Blois. I hear no more of Hortense than if she were on the Congo. I am writing to scold her.

"My best love to all."

Josephine wrote to her daughter:

"Since he can think you are neglecting him, lose no time in repairing wrongs which are not real, for he loves you like his own child, which adds much to my affection for him."

Napoleon joined Josephine at Aix late in the autumn. They were shown the four great Christian relics, and she asked for, and obtained, a piece of each of them. Thus protected against all malign influences she returned to France.

The Pope had been summoned to Paris to crown Napoleon, and the stage was being set for the great ceremony. One by one those of the Buonapartes who were still capable of fight, Giuseppe, Luigi, Elisa, and Carlotta, came back to the capital. At a family council* the Emperor told his brothers and sisters that his decision was taken. Josephine would be crowned and anointed. He further assured his brothers and sisters that they and their wives would be compelled to dance attendance on the Empress. Choking with rage, they refused to have anything to do with her.

"Very well, then," said he, "you will not be present at the coronation."

Josephine was told to busy herself with her robes and dresses, and realized that her careful policy was about to bring its reward. She resolved, with excellent foresight, to follow up her victory, and perceived the means of doing this in the coming of the Pope. No daughter of the Church could have shown a more anxious desire to honour the Father of Christendom than she displayed, and the good old man, a little ruffled by the Emperor's

* See note 154.

brusque ways, found the Empress and her daughter as charming as they both appeared to be devout. This good opinion was the more valuable that the Royalists had begun to display some antagonism against their protectress, but its chief merit, in Josephine's eyes, was far removed from politics. Having convinced the Pope of her piety, she was able, without fear of being misunderstood, to disclose to him the perilous state of her soul. A few days before the coronation she begged a private audience and, weeping bitterly, confessed that her marriage to Napoleon had not been blessed by the Church.*

Pius VII., horrified, raised his tearful daughter and promised her a speedy end to her affliction. Napoleon was told, tactfully enough, but firmly, that the Pope could not place the crown of France on the head of a man who, according to the law of the Church, was living in sin. The Emperor, whatever his feelings may have been, had no choice but to submit. It is a pity that nobody observed the twinkle in his eye when, his anger having cooled, he realized how completely his provident wife had outmanœuvred her opponents.

The marriage took place late at night on the eve of the coronation. Cardinal Fesch, Mama Letizia's half-brother, officiated in the private chapel of the palace. As she knelt beside her spouse at the altar Josephine's face was as radiant with happiness as that of any youthful bride. She would have felt less happy had she known that Napoleon had taken care to omit an insignificant but nevertheless essential element of the ceremony. The parish priest had not been invited.† Next day, December 2, 1804, Josephine, wearing her crown, drove to Notre-Dame with her husband. At the church door her train-bearers gathered round her. They were Elisa, Carlotta, and the wives of Giuseppe and Luigi. The Emperor and

* See note 155.

† See note 156.

Empress, having been anointed by the Pope, turned to follow him to the dais, where the imperial crowns awaited them. But only the Emperor was able to move. He turned and saw that his sisters were holding his wife back by her train.* This was their revenge.

* See note 157.

## CHAPTER XVIII

## PRINCES OF OLD TIME

Josephine at her coronation acquitted herself with so much distinction that even the snob, Madame de Rémusat, was constrained to write:

"I have had the honour to be presented to many 'real Princesses'—to use the phrase of the Faubourg St. Germain—but I never saw one who, to my eyes, presented so perfect a personification of elegance and majesty. In Napoleon's countenance I could read the conviction of all I have just said. He looked with an air of complacency at the Empress as she advanced towards him; and when she knelt down, when the tears, which she could not repress, fell upon her clasped hands, as they were raised to Heaven, or rather to Napoleon, both then appeared to enjoy one of those fleeting moments of pure felicity which are unique in a lifetime and serve to fill up a lustrum of years.

"His manner of crowning Josephine was most remarkable; after receiving the small crown surmounted by the cross, he had first to place it on his own head and then to transfer it to that of the Empress. When the moment arrived for placing the crown on the head of the woman whom popular superstition regarded as his good genius, his manner was almost playful. He took great pains to arrange the little crown, which was placed over Josephine's tiara of diamonds; he then put it on, took it off, and finally put it on again, as if to promise her she should wear it gracefully and lightly."

A few days after the coronation Luigi's second child, whom Napoleon insisted on calling "Napoleon-Louis," though the father had named him "Louis" only, was baptized by the Pope at St. Cloud.* Carlotta applied to

* See note 158.

have her infant daughter baptized at the same time and by the same hand, but was informed that this honour could not be granted to a Murat.*

"Everything for Josephine and Hortense, nothing for us," was her comment.

Some sops, nevertheless, were thrown to the Buonapartes. It had become necessary to find a king for the Italian Republic, and the post was offered to Giuseppe. He refused it lest, by accepting, he should lose his claim to the throne of France. Napoleone sent for Luigi, and, saying that this time he would take no refusal, told him that he had decided to adopt Napoleon-Charles at once, have the child crowned King of Italy, and give him two establishments in Paris—the one French, the other Italian. The object was plain; Napoleon-Charles was destined, some day, to rule over both France and Italy.

"I will never consent to my son holding a higher rank than my own," Luigi replied stubbornly.†

Nothing would move him. Napoleon put the crown of Italy on his own head, and, having appointed Eugène Vice-Chancellor of State, appointed him also Viceroy of Italy. The rumour at once began to circulate that Josephine's son was to be the Emperor's heir.

The outbreak of war with Austria and Russia in the autumn of 1805 threw Josephine into a panic, for she never forgot that all she possessed depended on a single life. Unable to feel safe in Paris without him, she insisted on accompanying Napoleon to Strasbourg, where she remained in constant anxiety throughout the campaign.

Napoleon's letters on his way to the front must have recalled the days in Milan.

"*October* 2, 1805.

"I am well placed for the campaign and I love you."

* See note 159. † See note 160.

"LOUISBOURG,
"*October* 4.

"There is as yet nothing new. My whole army is on the march. The weather is splendid. I am well. I trust in a few days to have something to communicate. Keep well and believe in my entire affection. There is a brilliant Court here, a new bride who is very beautiful, and, upon the whole, some very pleasant people, even our Electress, who appears extremely kind, although the daughter of the King of England."

"LOUISBOURG,
"*October* 5.

"I continue my march immediately. You will, my dear, be five or six days without hearing from me; don't be uneasy, it is connected with operations now taking place. All goes well and just as I could wish.

"Adieu, dear; I love you and embrace you."

"AUGSBOURG,
"*October* 10.

"For the past week I have been hurrying forward. The campaign has been successful enough so far. I am very well, although it rains almost every day. Events crowd on us rapidly. I have sent to France 4,000 prisoners, 8 flags, and have 14 of the enemy's cannon.

"Adieu, dear; I embrace you."

"*October* 12.

"My army has entered Munich. . . . The enemy is beaten, has lost its head, and everything points to a most glorious campaign, the shortest and most brilliant which has been made. . . . I am well, but the weather is frightful. It rains so much that I change my clothes twice a day. I love and embrace you."

"*October* 19.*

"I have tired myself more than I ought. Soaked garments and cold feet every day for a week have made me rather ill, but I have spent the whole of to-day indoors, which has rested me. My design has been accomplished. I have destroyed the

* See note 161.

THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE.
*From the painting by* PRUD'HON.

Austrian army by marches alone. I have made 60,000 prisoners, taken 120 pieces of cannon, more than 90 flags, and more than 30 generals. I am about to fling myself on the Russians; they are lost men. I am satisfied with my army. I have only lost 1,500 men, of whom two-thirds are but slightly wounded. . . . The moment I can give my thoughts to Italy, I will make Eugène [who as Viceroy of Italy was campaigning there in support of Napoleon] win a battle. Very best wishes to Hortense.

"Adieu, my Josephine; kindest regards to everyone."

"*October* 21.

"I am fairly well, my dear. . . . I have made 33,000 men lay down their arms, I have from 60,000 to 70,000 prisoners, more than 90 flags, and 200 pieces of cannon. Never has there been such a catastrophe in military annals. Take care of yourself. I am rather jaded. The weather has been fine for the last three days. The first column of prisoners files off for France to-day. Each column consists of 6,000 men."

"*October* 25.

"The two past nights have thoroughly rested me and I am going to start to-morrow for Munich. . . . I am going to advance upon the Inn in order to attack Austria in the heart of her hereditary States. I should much have liked to see you; but do not reckon upon my sending for you, unless there should be an armistice or winter quarters.

"Adieu, a thousand kisses. Give my compliments to the ladies."

"*October* 27.

"I received your letter. . . . I was grieved to see how needlessly you have made yourself unhappy. I have heard particulars, which have proved how much you love me, but you should have more fortitude and confidence. Besides, I had advised you that I should be six days without writing you. . . . You must be cheerful, amuse yourself and hope that, before the end of the month,* we shall meet.

"Adieu, my dear. Kindest regards to Hortense, Eugène,

* See note 162.

and the two Napoleons" [Hortense's two children, Napoleon-Charles and Napoleon-Louis].

"*November* 3.

"I am in full march; the weather is very cold, the earth covered with a foot of snow. This is rather trying. Luckily there is no want of wood; here we are always in forests. I am fairly well. My campaign proceeds satisfactorily; my enemies must have more anxieties than I. I wish to hear from you and to learn that you are not worrying yourself.

"Adieu, dear; I am going to lie down."

"*November* 5.

"We are within seventy miles of Vienna. The Russians do not stand. They are in full retreat. The House of Austria is at its wits' end, and, in Vienna, they are removing all the Court belongings. It is probable that something new will occur within five or six days. I much desire to see you again. My health is good. I embrace you."

"*November* 15.

"I have been in Vienna two days, my dear, rather fagged. I have not yet seen the city by day; I have traversed it by night. To-morrow I receive the notables and public bodies. Nearly all my troops are beyond the Danube in pursuit of the Russians.

"Adieu, Josephine; as soon as it is possible I will send for you. My best love."

"*November* 16.

"You can set out and make your way to Baden, thence to Stuttgart, and from there to Munich. . . . Take with you the wherewithal to make presents to the ladies and officers [of the Court of Bavaria, Napoleon's allies] who will wait upon you. They owe everything to you, and you owe nothing save civility. The Electress of Wurtemberg is a daughter of the King of England. She is an excellent woman; you should be very kind to her, but yet without affectation."

This advice from Napoleon came at the moment when Josephine was about to meet kings and queens for the first time on terms of equality. These kings and queens, in spite of the fact that they had been induced or com-

pelled to throw in their lot with the French, were inclined to give themselves airs. Indeed, the Elector of Bavaria, who was enormously fat and very bad tempered, had at first hotly resented Napoleon's march across his territory.

"What business has your Bonaparte here?" he had demanded of the French officers sent to appease his wrath. "Shall a prince of yesterday, a parvenu sovereign, offer violence to me? To me, a prince of old time, of the race of princes?"

Napoleon's overwhelming victories had effectually chastened that spirit and induced in its place an anxious desire to please, but it was possible, nevertheless, that Josephine might be made to feel that she also was a "princess of yesterday." She may be pardoned for the timidity she felt, in spite of the fact that, as her husband said, "they owe everything to you."

Josephine was received by the "princes of old time" with such humility that she could not doubt that Napoleon had spoken the truth. So excellent was her tact that her hosts formed the same impression of her as had already been formed by the Royalists in Paris. It was, indeed, by the goodness of Providence, they reflected, that this woman of the nobility, with her transparent kindness of heart, had been placed by the side of the devouring conqueror. Napoleon's next letter told of the Battle of Austerlitz, and was dated from the field.

"Austerlitz,
"*December* 3.

"I have despatched Lebrun to you from the field of battle. I have beaten the Russian and Austrian army commanded by the two Emperors. I am rather fagged. I have bivouacked eight days in the open air, through pretty keen nights. . . . The Russian Army is not only beaten but destroyed. I embrace you."

"Austerlitz,
"*December* 5.

"I have concluded a truce. The Russians have gone. The battle of Austerlitz is the grandest of all I have fought. Forty-five flags, more than 150 pieces of cannon, the standards of the Russian Guard, 20 generals, 30,000 prisoners, more than 20,000 slain—a horrible sight. The Emperor Alexander is in despair on his way back to Russia. Yesterday, at my bivouac, I saw the Emperor of Germany [Francis]. We talked for two hours; we have agreed to make peace quickly. The weather is not very bad. At last behold peace restored to the Continent; it is to be hoped that it is going to be to the world. The English will not know how to face us. I look forward with much pleasure to the moment when I can once more be near you. My eyes have been rather bad for the last two days [ophthalmia, due to the snow]; I have never suffered from them before.

"Adieu, my dear. I am fairly well, and very anxious to embrace you."

"Austerlitz,
"*December* 7.

"I have concluded an armistice; within a week peace will be made. I am anxious to hear that you reached Munich in good health. The Russians are retreating; they have lost enormously —more than 20,000 dead and 30,000 taken. Their army is reduced by three-quarters. . . . I have 3,000 wounded and 700 to 800 dead. My eyes are rather bad; it is a prevailing complaint and scarcely worth mentioning.

"Adieu, dear; I am very anxious to see you again. I am going to sleep to-night at Vienna."

"*December* 10.

"It is a long time since I had news of you. Have the grand fêtes at Baden, Stuttgart, and Munich made you forget the poor soldiers who live covered with mud, rain, and blood? We are endeavouring to conclude peace. The Russians have gone and are in flight far from here; they are on their way back to Russia, well drubbed and very much humiliated. I am very anxious to be with you again.

"Adieu, dear. My eyes are cured."

"*December* 19.

"GREAT EMPRESS,

"Not a single letter from you since you left Strasbourg! You have gone to Baden, Stuttgart, and Munich without writing us a word. This is neither very kind nor very affectionate. . . . The Russians are gone. I have a truce. In a few days I shall see what I may expect. Deign from the height of your grandeur to concern yourself a little with your slaves."

Josephine was really nearly as busy as her husband, for the festivities with which the kings and queens of old time tried to please her had no end. She explained her silence by saying that she was ill, and expressed a wish to join her husband. He replied:

"SCHONBRUNN,
"*December* 20.

"I got your letter of the 16th. I am sorry to learn that you are in pain. You are not strong enough to travel two hundred and fifty miles at this time of year. I don't know what I am going to do; I await events. I have no say in this matter; everything depends on what happens. Stay at Munich; amuse yourself. That should not be difficult when you have so many kind friends and so beautiful a country to stay in. I, for my part, am pretty busy. In a few days my decision will be made.

"Adieu, dear. Kindest and most affectionate regards."

The Peace of Presburg was concluded a week later. On New Year's Day, 1806, he joined her in Munich.

## CHAPTER XIX

## MATCH-MAKING

The singular success of the campaign of Austerlitz inclined the thoughts of many royal houses towards Napoleon and so brought the question of his divorce from Josephine back into the realm of practical politics. Nobody realized this more clearly than Josephine herself, but she relied for safety on the Papal blessing. The Emperor, strong as he was, was not strong enough, she thought, to challenge the Father of Christendom.

Consequently, it was without misgiving that a dangerous precedent was being established, that she helped her husband to arrange a marriage between Eugène and the Princess Augusta of Bavaria. The union was greatly to her liking, for Augusta was a granddaughter of George III. Napoleon, without consulting him, formally adopted the Viceroy of Italy as his son, bestowed on him the name "Napoleon-Eugène of France," and then sent an order to Milan bidding him come to Munich.* Where the Beauharnais were concerned no opposition need be feared. Invitations to the wedding were despatched, at the same time, to Hortense and Carlotta in Paris. Luigi forbade his wife to go, but Carlotta, angry as she was at the adoption of Josephine's son, could not resist the temptation. Her first words to Napoleone when she reached Munich were:

"Why don't you divorce Josephine and marry Augusta yourself?"

Josephine's tact proved invaluable, both before and

* See note 163.

after the wedding, for Augusta had been betrothed to the Hereditary Prince of Baden, her cousin, who was a brother-in-law both of the Emperor Alexander of Russia and the King of Sweden. It was necessary to handle this young man gently. The Empress hit on the idea of offering him her young kinswoman, Stephanie de Beauharnais,* who happened to be a remarkably pretty girl. Stephanie was accepted instead of Augusta.

These successes were as galling to her sisters-in-law as they were pleasing to Josephine. When the Court returned to Paris, the three women—for Paolina had come back from Rome—eased their exasperation by reproaching their brother. The Emperor gave Elisa the Principality of Lucca and held out hopes that, in the near future, he might be able to do something also for the Princess Borghese and Madame Murat. He was as good as his word; Murat was shortly afterwards created Grand Duke of Berg and Cleves. But these appointments lost all their attractions when the news leaked out that Hortense was to be Queen of Holland.

* See note 164.

## CHAPTER XX

## THE "STRATAGEM"

The hatred which Napoleon's sisters cherished against Josephine was coloured in each instance by disposition and character. Elisa, Bacciocchi's wife, who made up for the plainness of her face by the poetic flavour which she laboured to impart to her speech, despised her sister-in-law as a Philistine. The blue-stocking of the Buonaparte family and friend of Madame de Stael, she possessed a nature at once robust and finicky, which was enough a caricature of Napoleon's to set his teeth on edge. Elisa affected to think that she had been commissioned by Providence to improve her brother's mind, and, whenever she could, made him writhe under long exhortations on the superior merit of the pen to the sword. To her *salon* came at one time or another Chateaubriand, Fontanes, La Harpe, Boufflers, and Arnault, admirable courtiers, who assured her that hers was the only lamp kept burning in the darkness of an artistic and literary midnight, and who, even when escape was nowise possible, listened to her compositions. Such a woman could not be really dangerous to Josephine, who understood her at a glance. Elisa's power of wounding was limited to her spiteful and witless tongue.

How different was the case of Paolina! This lively girl, with her great mirrors and delicious, lingering toilets, inspired her sister-in-law with living fear. Apparently interested only in the care of her beauty or in her kaleidoscopic love affairs, she watched Josephine as patiently as a cat watches the bird it has marked for

destruction. Her sleepless hate, rooted in the love she bore Napoleone, nourished itself on his wife's infidelities of body and spirit. With less brains than Elisa, she was much cleverer and far more agreeable. Instead of boring her brother, she amused him, especially when his itch to edify and exhort was in abeyance. The arsenal of perfumes, soaps, face creams, lip-sticks, powders, paints, salves, tonics, which she possessed was a constant source of bewilderment to him, and so were her hats and frocks and the billows of lace and silk which always surged about her. Even he seems to have felt honoured to be allowed to assist at the toilet of the prettiest woman in Europe; he was justifiably proud that this woman was his sister. Paolina knew how to improve these shining hours. Possessed through her second marriage of a title and a fortune which her beauty had won for her, she was in a position to let her gay tongue loose on those whose Gargantuan hunger was not yet satisfied. Napoleone used to repeat her remarks to Josephine.

Carlotta, the youngest of the three, would have been called a beauty in a world which had never known Paolina. Her delicate features, so like those of Napoleone, suggested, truthfully, great strength of character, but failed to suggest other qualities which were as highly, or more highly, developed. She was brave, fierce, implacably ambitious, but there were mingled in her nature, along with a resolute fidelity to her own interests, most unruly passions. She was always losing her temper and she was always falling in love.

The news that Hortense was to be a queen while she was only to be a grand duchess instantly robbed her of her self-control. They had been schoolfellows at Madame Campan's and learned young their jealousy of one another, and everything that had happened since had increased it. Murat's wife told Napoleone that

nothing would induce her to go to Berg with her husband, and that, until he saw fit to treat her as well as he was treating Josephine's daughter, she would stay in Paris. Then her rage burnt itself out and her crafty ambition reasserted itself. She contrived to hint to her brother that she was in a position to supply him with the means of proving, once for all, whether or not he was capable of begetting a child of his own.* To her joy, Napoleone fell in with her suggestion, and what Hortense calls "a stratagem" was resolved on. The plan was to introduce the Emperor to a young girl who had been deserted, a year before, by her husband and in whose sad plight Carlotta was interesting herself. He duly came to luncheon at his sister's house at Neuilly, and from that moment Eléonore La Plaigne† disappeared from the house. She was still invisible when the war with Prussia broke out, but she bore, shortly afterwards, a son of which Carlotta took care. Napoleone was at once informed that his heart's desire had been granted.

In spite of the secrecy which surrounded the stratagem, Josephine heard about it. The fact that she was powerless to bring the affair to an end increased her agony of mind and made her ill. With red eyes and sunken cheeks she wandered dismally among her husband's gay courtiers, spreading everywhere the tidings of her sorrow. When Hortense went away with Luigi to Holland she seems to have felt herself utterly deserted, for she wrote to her daughter:

"Since your departure I have been quite ill with fever, but chiefly from distress at your absence. How can I endure this separation from you, from a daughter so sweet, so tender and loving as you, who are the charm of my life. My God! I am so sad because I can't see you often."

* See note 165. † See note 166.

Carlotta could scarcely contain herself when she knew that Eléonore was pregnant, and hints were actually allowed to reach the Empress. They produced storms of tears and complaints, from which Napoleon, who was very much occupied with his preparations for war, was glad to escape by seeing as little of his wife as possible.

The prospect of a new campaign revived the demands for an heir. Further, it was argued that, if the Emperor married a princess of one of the great houses, his enemies would cease to look on him as a soldier of Fortune and become his friends, to the advantage of France. The excellent effect which Eugène's wedding had produced was adduced as evidence in favour of this view. Josephine perceived that her triumph at Munich was likely to cost her dear, especially if the war against Prussia proved as successful as that against Austria. Fortified by the success of the stratagem, urged on by the wishes of his people, and stimulated by his personal ambition, the Emperor would be sorely tempted to sacrifice her.

In her despair she consulted the famous sorceress, Madame Lenormand,* who reminded her shrewdly that she was "Our Lady of Victory." The hint was not wasted. She asked Napoleon humbly that she might be allowed to accompany him to the frontier, pleading that her presence at Milan during the campaign of Italy, and at Strasbourg during the campaign of Austerlitz, had coincided with events so glorious that she could not help feeling that she brought him luck. Napoleon, as superstitious as herself, offered no objection.

The journey to Mayence revived her spirits, for her husband was in good humour and she enjoyed the excitement of his method of travel—behind a team of six great Normandy horses, urged always to their utmost

* See note 167.

speed. But when their destination was reached and she saw Napoleon making his preparations to leave her, the vultures of fear hovered over her again. In the company of Madame de La Rochefoucauld, her lady-in-waiting, a little hunchback whose licentious pessimism darkened counsel and whose forebodings of evil never ceased, she began to practise divination with the aid of a pack of playing-cards. As soon as the army moved away the séances became her sole concern. She demanded of the cards information about the campaign, about her husband's new mistress, about the child this girl was reputed to be going to bear, about the likelihood of a divorce, and even about her own successor on the throne of France. Thanks to Madame de La Rochefoucauld, the answers vouchsafed were uniformly dismal and depressing. Divorce, the waiting-woman croaked, was certain. Certain also it was that the Prussians would win all the battles.* Was Madame de La Rochefoucauld exacting vengeance in making these prophecies? She was a kinswoman of Alexander de Beauharnais' mother. Josephine passed from divination to weeping, and placed so little restraint on her grief that, in the absence of news from the front, her tears became the sole topic, not only in the Teutonic palace, but even in the city itself. Nobody could understand them. Had the Empress of the French lost her faith in her husband's lucky star?

The arrival of Hortense and her children from the Hague was followed by a momentary lull in the storm, but the Queen of Holland, like everybody else, brought bad news with her. Luigi, she had to confess, had not improved since he became a king and was as determined as ever that his brother should never adopt Napoleon-Charles.

Echoes of his wife's lamentations soon reached

* See note 168.

Napoleon, who was then preparing for the Battle of Jena. He wrote at once to expostulate:

"*October* 5, 1806.

"It will be quite in order for the Princess of Baden [Stephanie] to come to Mayence. I cannot think why you weep; you do wrong to make yourself ill. Hortense is inclined to pedantry; she loves to air her views. She has written me; I am sending her a reply. She ought to be happy and cheerful. Pluck and a merry heart, that's the recipe."

It was not a recipe which had any attractions for Josephine. When she was not weeping or consulting her cards she spent her time listening for the sound of the post-horns, with which couriers from the front announced their coming a league away from the town. Napoleon wrote short letters on October 7 and 13, in the latter of which he spoke scathingly of the young Queen Louise of Prussia. Two days later he announced what was, perhaps, the most complete of all his victories, since it gave him the whole of modern Germany as a prize.

"Jena, 3 a.m.,
"*October* 15, 1806.

"My Dear,

"I have made excellent manœuvres against the Prussians. Yesterday I won a great victory. They had 150,000 men. I have made 20,000 prisoners, taken 100 pieces of cannon and flags. I was in presence of the King of Prussia and near to him; I nearly captured him and the Queen. . . . I am in excellent health.

"Adieu, dear; keep well and love me. If Hortense is at Mayence give her a kiss; also to Napoleon [Napoleon-Charles] and to the little one [Napoleon-Louis]."

He wrote the next day that "never was an army more thoroughly beaten and more entirely destroyed," and

announced, a week later, that he was about to enter Berlin.

The stricken Empress, convinced that her hour was at hand, could no longer be comforted, even by her daughter. In her transports of grief she saw herself, once more, refused admittance to her husband's house, outcast, forsaken. What use was Josephine to the Master of Europe?

Hortense grew frightened. Then it occurred to her that perhaps the spectacle of the sorrows of other people might distract her mother's attention from her own sorrow. Prussian princes and generals, the wreckage of war, whom Napoleon had captured or dispossessed, were brought to see the Empress. Their lively distresses acted like blisters on a stubborn ache and afforded a temporary respite.* Josephine even gathered sufficient courage to reprove her spouse for the rude remarks about the Queen of Prussia which he had inserted in several of his bulletins. As a consequence, her reputation as the good angel of vanquished royalty was established. Napoleon's letters became more frequent after the Battle of Jena and showed that his thoughts were still with her.

"*November* 1, 1806.

"Talleyrand has just arrived, and tells me, my dear, that you do nothing but cry. What on earth do you want? You have your daughter, your grandchildren, and good news; surely these are sufficient reasons for being happy and contented."

"*November* 2.

"One pleasure is alone wanting—that of seeing you—but I hope that will not long be deferred."

"*November* 6.

"Yours to hand in which you seem annoyed at the bad things I say about women [a reference to his strictures on the Queen of Prussia]. It is true that I hate intriguing women more

* See note 169.

than anything. I am used to kind, gentle, persuasive women; these are the kind I like. If I have been spoilt it is not my fault, but yours. . . ."

"*November* 16.

"I note with satisfaction that my convictions give you pleasure. You are wrong to think flattery was intended; I was telling you of yourself as I see you. I am grieved to think that you are tired of Mayence. Were the journey less long you might come here, for there is no longer an enemy, or, if there is, he is beyond the Vistula—that is to say, more than three hundred miles away. I will wait to hear what you think about it. I should also be delighted to see M. Napoleon [Napoleon-Charles]. . . . I have still too much business here for me to return to Paris."

"*November* 22.

"I am sorry to find you in the dumps; yet you have every reason to be cheerful. You are wrong to show so much kindness to people who show themselves unworthy of it. Madame L. [La Rochefoucauld] is a fool; such an idiot that you ought to know her by this time and pay no heed to her. Be contented, happy in the influence you possess. In a few days I shall decide whether to summon you here or send you to Paris."

"*November* 26.

"I shall see in a day or two whether you should come. You can keep ready. I shall be very pleased if the Queen of Holland [Hortense] be of the party."

"*November* 27.

"To-night I shall be at Posen, after which I shall send for you to come to Berlin, so that you can arrive there the same day as I."

"*December* 2.

"All these fair Poles are Frenchwomen at heart. But there is only one woman for me. Would you know her? To tell you the truth, my heart would only have nice things to say to you."

"*December* 3.

"Yours of November 26 received. I notice two things in it. You say I do not read your letters; it is an unkind thought. I

take your bad opinion anything but kindly. You tell me it is a mere phantasy of the night, and you add that you are not jealous. I found out long ago that angry persons always assert that they are not angry; that those who are afraid keep on repeating that they have no fear; you, therefore, are convicted of jealousy. I am delighted to hear it! Nevertheless, you are wrong. . . . I had a ball yesterday of the provincial nobility . . . the women good looking enough, rich enough, dowdy enough, although in Paris fashions."

"*December* 3 (*later the same day as the last letter*).

"Yours of the 27th received, from which I see that your little head is quite turned. Still you must calm yourself. I wrote you that I was in Poland; that when we were established in winter quarters you could come; you will have to wait a few days. The greater one becomes the less one can consult one's wishes —being dependent on events and circumstances. You can come to Frankfort or Darmstadt. I am hoping to send for you in a few days—that is, if circumstances permit. The warmth of your letters makes me realize that you, like other pretty women, know no bounds. What you want must be done; but as for me, I declare that of all men I am the greatest slave; my master has no pity, and this master is the nature of things.

"Adieu. Keep well. The person that I wished to speak to you about is Madame L. [La Rochefoucauld], of whom everyone is talking ill; they assure me that she is more of a Prussian than a Frenchwoman. I don't believe it, but I think her an idiot who talks nothing but trash."

"*December* 10.

"An officer has just brought me a rug, a gift from you; it is somewhat short and narrow, but I thank you for it none the less. . . . I shall write for you to come with at least as much pleasure as you will have in coming."

"*December* 12.

"I have not received any letters from you, but know, nevertheless, that you are well. . . . Hortense will come, then, with Napoleon. I am delighted to hear it. I long to see things shape themselves into a position to enable you to come."

"*December* 15.

"I start for Warsaw. In a fortnight I shall be back; I hope then to be able to send for you. But, if that seems a long time, I should be very glad if you would return to Paris, where you are wanted."

"*December* 20.

". . . I trust that in five or six days I shall be able to send for you. . . ."

"*December* 29.

". . . In two days I shall be at Warsaw, whence I shall write you. . . ."

"*December* 31.

"I have had a good laugh over your last letters. You idealize the fair ones of Great Poland in a way they do not deserve. . . . I shrug my shoulders at the stupidity of Madame L. [La Rochefoucauld]; still you should show her your displeasure and advise her not to be so idiotic. Such things become common property and make many people indignant. For my part, I scorn ingratitude as the worst fault in a human heart. I know that, instead of comforting you, these people give you pain."

This letter was written on the day on which its author heard from Carlotta of the birth of Eléonore's son* and on the day before he met Marie Walewski† for the first time, a fact which must be accounted a feather in Madame de La Rochefoucauld's cap, for the cards had foretold trouble from several directions at once. Josephine and her women were sitting on their boxes waiting for permission to start for the front, but the little hunchback did not believe that permission would ever be granted, and went about shaking her head. Very soon it became clear that, once again, her cards had informed her correctly, for the absent lord, after his meeting with Marie, no longer looked forward to the task of drying his wife's tears.

* See note 170. † See note 171.

"*January* 3, 1807.

"I have received your letter. Your grief pains me; but one must bow to events. There is too great a distance between Mayence and Warsaw; you must, therefore, wait till circumstances allow me to come to Berlin. . . . I am inclined to think that you ought to return to Paris, where your presence is needed. Send away those ladies who have their own business to attend to; you will be better without people who have given you so much worry. . . . I love you from my heart."

"*January* 7.

"I am pained by all you tell me; but the season being cold, the roads very bad and not at all safe, I cannot consent to expose you to so many fatigues and dangers. Return to Paris to spend the winter there. Go to the Tuileries, receive, and lead the same life as you are accustomed to do when I am there. That is my wish. . . . Believe that it costs me more than you to put off for some weeks the pleasure of seeing you."

Josephine did not believe him. She was improving so fast as a correspondent that she had actually written her husband two letters on the same day. He answered them both:

"Warsaw,
"*January* 8, 1807.

"My Dear,

"I received your letter of the 27th with those of M. Napoleon [Napoleon-Charles] and Hortense, which were enclosed with it. I had begged you to return to Paris. The season is too inclement, the roads unsafe and detestable; the distances far too great for me to permit you to come hither, where my affairs detain me. It would take you at least a month to come. You would arrive ill; by that time it might be necessary to start back again; it would therefore be folly. Your residence at Mayence is too dull; Paris reclaims you; go there, it is my wish. I am more vexed about it than you. I should have liked to spend the long nights of this season with you, but we must obey circumstances.

"Adieu, dear.

"Yours ever,
"Napoleon."

These circumstances can be sufficiently understood from a letter written about the same time to Marie Walewski:

"MARIE, MY SWEET MARIE,

"My first thought is for you, my first desire to see you again. You will come again, will you not? If not, the eagle will fly to you. A friend tells me I shall see you at dinner. Deign, then, to accept this bouquet; let it become a mysterious link which shall establish between us a secret union in the midst of the crowd surrounding us. Exposed to the glances of the crowd we shall still understand each other. When my hand presses my heart you will know that it is full of thoughts of you; and, in answer, you will press closer your bouquet. Love me, my bonnie Marie, and never let your hand leave your bouquet."

Josephine's second letter of December 27 received a shorter answer than her first, for the oracles over which Madame de La Rochefoucauld presided had foretold, correctly, a reverse, and the Empress had communicated this news to her husband.

"WARSAW,
"*January* 11, 1807.

"Your letter of the 27th received, from which I note that you are somewhat uneasy about military events. Everything is settled, as I have told you, to my satisfaction; my affairs prosper. The distance is too great for me to allow you to come so far at this time of year. I am in splendid health; sometimes rather wearied by the length of the nights.

"Up to the present I have seen few people here.

"Adieu, dear; I wish you to be cheerful and to give a little life to the capital. I would much like to be there.

"Yours ever,
"NAPOLEON."

He wrote again on January 16:

"MY DEAR,

"I have received your letter of January 5; all that you tell me of your unhappiness pains me. Why these tears, these

repinings? Have you, then, no longer any fortitude? I shall see you soon. Never doubt my feelings; and if you wish to be still dearer to me, show character and strength of mind. I am humiliated to think that my wife can distrust my destinies.

"Adieu, dear; I love you and I long to see you, and wish to learn that you are content and happy."

"*January* 18.

"I fear that you are greatly grieved at our separation and at your return to Paris. . . . I insist on your having more courage. I hear that you are always weeping. Fie, how unbecoming it is! Your letter of January 7 makes me unhappy. Be worthy of me. Show more character. Present a suitable figure in Paris and, above all, be contented. I am very well and I love you much; but if you are always crying I shall think you wanting in courage and character. I do not love cowards. An Empress ought to have fortitude."

Paris no longer attracted Josephine. Every instinct told her that she must reach her husband or, at any rate, keep herself informed of his doings. At Mayence, on those long lines of communication which extended across the face of Europe, she could catch rumour on the wing. As soon as the news about Marie reached her she busied herself to obtain details about the girl, using to this end natural as well as supernatural means. Her letters to Napoleon reflected the agitation of her thoughts consequent on what she heard, and must have recalled sharply to his mind his days of disillusionment in the Serbollini Palace at Milan.

"I am in despair," he wrote under date January 19, 1807, "at the tone of your letters and at what I hear. I forbid you to weep, to be petulant and uneasy. I want you to be cheerful, lovable, and happy."

How could she be when she knew that every night in Warsaw a beautiful, golden-haired girl of twenty was being conducted secretly to his headquarters, and when

all the reports agreed that this was no passing fancy, but a great passion to which the woman was as deeply committed as the man? Napoleon, she was sure, had never before experienced such feelings except for herself. Who could have supposed that, at his age, he would fall in love like a romantic schoolboy? Even Madame de La Rochefoucauld had not foreseen so unlikely a contingency.

It is not infidelity which women fear, but affection. What influence was this affair likely to exert on the question of divorce? Josephine and Madame de La Rochefoucauld discussed the matter interminably, but were unable to reach any conclusion, and the oracles were silent. There was no relief except in tears, and even these were forbidden her. She continued to receive the princes and generals, and did not, even yet, abandon the hope of being allowed to travel to Poland. With an importunity, which sufficiently proves the determination of her character, she insisted that it was her right, as a wife, to stand beside her husband.

"Return to Paris," wrote Napoleon on January 23; "be cheerful, be content there. . . . I have laughed at what you say about having married a husband in order to be beside him. I thought, in my ignorance, that the wife was made for the husband, the husband for his country, his family, and glory. Pardon my ignorance. One is always learning from our fair ladies.

"Adieu, my dear. Think how much it costs me not to send for you. Say to yourself: 'It is a proof how precious I am to him.'"

Napoleon, like Robespierre, was most formidable in his edifying moods. The tone of this letter warned her that she had better obey. And so the boxes which had been packed to go to Warsaw were sent off home, and the dingy little party of middle-aged women, all of

whom except herself were delighted to have escaped the horrors of a Polish winter, entered the travelling carriages. When she reached Paris she wrote again to her husband, pouring out the bitterness of her spirit.

"Your letter," he replied piously, "has given me pain; it is too sad. That's the fault of not being a little more devout. You tell me that your glory consists in your happiness. That is narrow-minded; one should say, my glory consists in the happiness of others. It is not conjugal; one should say, my glory consists in the happiness of my husband. It is not maternal; one should say, my glory consists in the happiness of my children. Now, since nations—your husband, your children—can only be happy with a certain amount of glory, you must not make little of it. Fie, Josephine, your heart is excellent and your arguments weak! You feel acutely but you don't argue as well.

"That's sufficient quarrelling. I want you to be cheerful, happy in your lot, and that you should obey, not with grumbling and tears, but with gaiety of heart and a little more good temper.

"Adieu, dear; I start to-night to examine my outposts."

This tidy sermon, with its three heads and valuable moral, confirmed Josephine's worst fears, and it was probably with a sense of the greatest relief that she heard that, within a week of committing it to paper, the preacher had suffered a chastising experience at the Battle of Eylau. He wrote her several letters from the battlefield "that you may not be uneasy," and the style of them showed that the devout Marie was no longer at his side.

"Eylau,
"*February* 11, 1807, 3 a.m.

"You must have been very anxious. I have beaten the enemy in a fight to be remembered, but it has cost many brave lives. . . . Do not afflict yourself, please; all this will soon be over, and the happiness of seeing you will make me forget promptly my fatigues.

"Young Tascher [Louis Tascher, the Baron's son], of the 4th Regiment, has behaved well; he has had a rough time of it. I have summoned him near me; I have made him an orderly officer—there's an end to his troubles. This young man interests me.

"Adieu, dear; a thousand kisses."

"EYLAU,
"*February* 14, 1807.

"I am still at Eylau. . . . You are sure to be uneasy, and that thought troubles me. Nevertheless, calm yourself, my dear, and be cheerful. . . . Tell Caroline and Pauline that their husbands, the Grand Duke [of Berg] and the Prince [Borghèse] are in excellent health."

Was he apologizing to "Our Lady of Victories"? She had reached Paris on January 31, and as soon as her back was turned, on February 8, his record of invariable and overwhelming victory was broken. Here was something at last to offset against Eléonore's infant son. She went to the opera and gave a few banquets, and then, when these dismal pleasures began to pall, slipped back once more into that genial circle from which she had so long been estranged. There were cheery little suppers and delightful visits to the smaller theatres, where the advantages of a throne might be enjoyed without its encumbrances. But the eagle, hovering far away on the Polish plain, saw her. One day in early spring the stream of kindly comments on the weather and his reactions to it, and of compliments to her for doing what he told her, with which he had so long nourished her regard, was sharply interrupted:

"*March* 13.

"I learn that the vexatious tittle-tattle that occurred in your drawing-room at Mayence has begun again; make people hold their tongues. I shall be seriously annoyed with you if you do not find a remedy. You allow yourself to be worried by the chatter of people who ought to console you. I want you to have

some character and to know how to put everybody into his (or her) proper place."

"*March* 17.

"It is not necessary for you to go to the small plays and into a private box; it ill befits your rank; you should go only to the four great theatres, and always into the royal box. Live as you would do if I were in Paris."

In this letter for the first and only time the familiar *tu* was replaced by *vous*.

"*March* 25.

"If you really wish to please me you must live exactly as you live when I am at Paris. Then you were not in the habit of visiting the second-rate theatres or other places. You ought always to go into the royal box. As for your home life, hold receptions there and have your fixed circle of friends; that, my dear, is the only way to deserve my approbation. Greatness has its inconveniences; an Empress cannot go where a private individual may."

"*March* 27.

"Your letter pains me. There is no question of your dying. You are in good health and you can have no just ground for grief. . . . You must spend the whole month of April at Paris. . . . See as little as possible of that Madame de P. She is a woman who belongs to the lowest grade of society; she is thoroughly common and vulgar."

Josephine answered by a reference to his mistresses, which must have been irritating, since he had just gone into residence at the Castle of Finckenstein with Marie Walewski, now abandoned by her seventy-year-old husband.

"I have just received your letter," he replied under date, Finckenstein, May 10, 1807. "I know not what you tell me about ladies in correspondence with me. I love only my little Josephine, sweet, pouting, and capricious, who can quarrel with grace, as she does everything else, for she is always lovable, except when she is jealous; then she becomes a regular

little devil. But let us come back to these ladies. If I had leisure for any among them, I assure you that I should like them to be pretty rosebuds. Are those of whom you speak of this kind? I wish you to have only those persons to dinner who have dined with me; that your list be the same for your assemblies; that you never make intimates at Malmaison of ambassadors and foreigners. If you should do the contrary you would displease me. Finally, do not allow yourself to be duped too much by persons whom I do not know, and who would not come to the house if I were there."

If he had lectures for her she had a piece of news for him. Carlotta had fallen violently in love with Junot,* the Governor of Paris, who kept his carriage standing half the night in her courtyard. He was as annoyed as she had expected:

"FINCKENSTEIN,
"*May* 12.

"I have just received your letter. I was sorry to see the bad conduct of Madame Murat. Might you not speak to her about mending her ways, which, at present, might easily cause unpleasantness on the part of her husband?"

Two, it seemed, could play at Stratagems.

* See note 172.

## CHAPTER XXI

### A HEAVY BLOW

On May 5, 1807, in the royal palace at the Hague, Napoleon-Charles died of diphtheria after an illness lasting two days.*

His mother was beside him, and when she realized that he was dead a scream broke from her lips. After that, though poor Luigi did his best to comfort her, she remained in a state of stony indifference. The news, following so soon after the ominous bulletins from the battlefield of Eylau, had a depressing effect in Paris. Was Napoleon's star setting? Carlotta, feeling the need perhaps of placating the Beauharnais in view of her own shaky position, rushed off at once to Holland. Josephine, who dared not leave France without Napoleon's permission, travelled to Laeken in Belgium and there awaited her daughter. Their meeting was extremely painful. Hortense stood, staring with vacant, tearless eyes at her mother. In the days which followed the Empress found the widest possible scope for her gift of consolation and for the natural kindness of her heart. She laboured to restore Hortense to a normal state of mind, but could not meanwhile keep her own grief within compass. Napoleon appears to have foreseen exactly what her reactions to such a calamity would be.†

" Finckenstein,
" *May* 14.

" I realize the grief which the death of this poor Napoleon must cause you; you can imagine what I am enduring. I should

* See note 173. † See note 174.

like to be by your side in order that your sorrow might be kept within reasonable bounds. You have had the good fortune never to lose children, but it is one of the pains and conditions attached to our miseries here below. I trust I may hear you have been rational in your sorrow and that your health remains good. Would you willingly augment my grief?"

Having received, two days later, Josephine's own account of the child's death, written immediately after she had heard about it, he sent further messages:

"FINCKENSTEIN,
"*May* 16.

"I have just received your letter of May 6. I see from it how ill you are already, and I fear that you are not rational and that you are making yourself too wretched about the misfortune which has come upon us."

"FINCKENSTEIN,
"*May* 20.

"I am sorry to see that you have not been rational. Grief has bounds which should not be passed. Take care of yourself for the sake of your friend and believe in my entire affection."

"FINCKENSTEIN,
"*May* 24.

"Your letter from Laeken just received. I am sorry to see your grief undiminished and that Hortense has not yet come; she is unreasonable, and does not deserve our love, since she only loves her children. Try to calm her and do not make me wretched. For every ill without a remedy consolations must be found."

"FINCKENSTEIN,
"*May* 26.

"I have just received your letter of the 16th. I have seen with pleasure that Hortense has arrived at Laeken. I am disturbed at what you tell me of the state of stupor in which she still is. She must have more courage and force herself to have it. I cannot think why they want her to go to take the waters; she will forget her trouble much better in Paris and find more

sources of consolation. Show force of character. Be cheerful and keep well.

"Adieu, dear. I suffer much from all your grief; it is a great trouble to me not to be by your side."

"DANTZIG,
"*June* 2.

"MY DEAR,

"I note your arrival at Malmaison. I have no letters from you. I am vexed with Hortense; she has never written me a line. All that you tell me about her grieves me. Why have you not found her some distractions? Weeping won't do it. I trust that you will take care of yourself so that I may not find you utterly woebegone. . . . Pass on this letter to Hortense."

"MARIENBURG,
"*June* 3.

"Every letter that comes from St. Cloud tells me you are always weeping. That is not well; it is necessary for you to keep well and cheerful. Hortense is still unwell; what you tell me of her makes me very sorry for her."

"FINCKENSTEIN,
"*July* 6.

"Your yesterday's letter pained me. It seems to me that you are always grieving and that you are unreasonable."

Napoleon wrote four letters to Hortense herself:

"*May* 14.

"MY DAUGHTER,

"On hearing the loss that we have just suffered, I thought how grief-stricken you must be. You must be brave. I am glad to know that you are going to Paris. Take care of your health in order not to increase the sorrow I already feel.

"Your very affectionate father,
"NAPOLEON."

"*May* 20.

"MY DAUGHTER,

"All the news I get from the Hague makes it clear that you are not being sensible. However legitimate your grief, it must have limits. Never impair your health; seek distractions,

and know that life is strewn with so many rocks, and maybe the source of so many miseries, that death is not the greatest of all.

"Your affectionate father,
"NAPOLEON."

"*June* 2.

"MY DAUGHTER,

"You have not written me a line. In your great and natural grief, you have forgotten everything, as if you had nothing more to lose. They say you care no longer for anyone, that you are indifferent about everything; I note the truth of it by your silence. This is not well, Hortense. It is not what you promised me. Your son was everything to you. Are your mother and myself nothing? Had I been at Malmaison I should have shared your grief, but I should have wished you, at the same time, to turn to your best friends.

"Good-bye, my daughter; be cheerful. It is necessary to be resigned. Keep well in order to fulfil all your duties. My wife is utterly miserable about your condition; do not increase her sorrow.

"Your affectionate father,
"NAPOLEON."

"*June* 16.

"MY DAUGHTER,

"I have your letter dated from Orleans. Your grief pains me, but I should like you to possess more courage; to live is to suffer, and the true man is always fighting for mastery over himself. I do not like to see you unjust towards the little Napoleon-Louis and towards all your friends. Your mother and I had hoped that we filled a larger place in your heart than we do. I won a great victory on June 14. I am well and love you dearly.

"Good-bye, my child. I embrace you with all my heart."

Napoleon-Louis was left with Josephine, who found comfort in his presence. "He amuses me much," she wrote to Hortense on June 11. "He is so gentle. I find he has all the ways of that poor child whom we mourn."

And again: "There remain to you a husband, an interesting child, and a mother whose love you know." She herself had her excellent gardens at Malmaison, where she passed much of her time. But grief was powerless to rob her of her habits. To Malmaison flocked the greedy and unscrupulous harpies who always surrounded her when Napoleon was not at hand to drive them away. All had her confidence; all abused it.

And yet behind this disreputable crowd, behind the crystals and packs of cards which Madame de La Rochefoucauld employed with such tireless zeal, behind her tear-stained face persisted an element of cool strength. The old campaigner, in spite of her grievous loss, was still formidable. Josephine, in her own way, presents as great an enigma as Napoleon. The curious impression of tawdriness which both at times conveyed was never really at any moment a measure of their characters. Under the surface both the man and the woman moved strongly and swiftly. Soldiers of fortune, but also on occasion knights errant and sometimes crusaders, they passed, side by side, through the brawling, hungry, scandalous ranks of their courtiers, and few knew them. Napoleon, as the guilty husband, is absurd enough; as the conqueror he belongs perhaps a little to melodrama. But it is harder to find commonplace words to measure the effect of him on the minds of men. And so with Josephine. Call her disreputable, and you do not libel her. She was pitiable by comparison with many of the women who surrounded her, such as, for example, Mama Letizia, or the "old ladies of the Faubourg," or even Madame de Stael. But she animated the thoughts of Napoleon, who filled the mind of the universe and haunts it. That is an accomplishment which loses nothing of its singular character from the fact that she never loved him.

Scarcely had she begun to recover from the loss of the heir with whom she had provided her husband than another of his resounding victories—the Battle of Friedland—came to exalt him to the skies and abase her hopes.

"FRIEDLAND,
"*June* 15, 1807.

"MY DEAR,

"I write you only a line, for I am very tired by reason of several days' bivouacking. My children have worthily celebrated the anniversary of the Battle of Marengo.

"The Battle of Friedland will be as celebrated for my people and equally glorious. The entire Russian army routed, 80 pieces of cannon captured, 30,000 men taken or slain, 25 Russian generals killed, wounded, or taken, the Russian Guard wiped out.

"The battle is worthy of her sisters—Marengo, Austerlitz, Jena. The bulletin will tell you the rest. My loss is not considerable. I outmanœuvred the enemy successfully.

"Be content and without uneasiness.

"Adieu, dear, my horse is waiting. . . ."

"TILSIT,
"*June* 25, 1807.

"MY DEAR,

"I have just seen the Emperor Alexander. I was much pleased with him. He is a very handsome, young, and kind-hearted Emperor; he has more intelligence than people usually give him credit for. To-morrow he will lodge in the town of Tilsit.

"Adieu, dear; I am very anxious to hear that you are well and happy. My health is very good."

"TILSIT,
"*July* 3, 1807.

"Everything goes excellently. I think I told you that the Emperor of Russia drinks your health with much cordiality. He, as well as the King of Prussia, dines with me every day. I sincerely trust that you are happy.

"Adieu, dear. A thousand loving remembrances."

How well she knew that tone! He had everything now—Eléonore's son, Marie Walewski, victory over all his enemies, kings and emperors as his companions, the mastery of Europe. There were whispers already in her ante-rooms about the Grand Duchess Catherine of Russia, the Emperor Alexander's young sister, and about the advantages to France likely to follow a Russian marriage. Her tears gushed forth as Madame de La Rochefoucauld dealt out a new hand. Would Josephine's indifference excite any longer the interest of Napoleon? Probably not, but that was the only card she possessed. With heroic courage she played her Yarborough against his Kings and Queens and Knaves, telling him truthfully that his victory left her cold.

"I have your letter of June 25," he replied under date, Tilsit, July 6, 1807. "I was grieved to see that you were selfish and that the success of my arms should have no charm for you.

"The beautiful Queen of Prussia is to come to-morrow to dine with me.

"I am well and am longing to see you again when destiny shall so order it. Still, it may be sooner than we expect.

"Adieu, dear; a thousand loving remembrances."

"Tilsit,
"*July* 8, 1807.

"The Queen of Prussia is really charming; she is full of *coquetterie* for me. But don't be jealous; I am an oil-cloth, over which all that can only glide. It would cost me too much to play the lover."

So the power to annoy him remained to her. She picked up her trick and made ready a desolation of tears against his return.

## CHAPTER XXII

### FOUCHÉ'S PROPOSAL

The letters from Tilsit had warned Josephine to look out for squalls. Napoleon was never so dictatorial and fussy as when he was successful.* He came bustling back like a commercial traveller returning full of business, and began to unpack his grievances. But he said nothing about divorce.†

This reticence was so unexpected that for a time she thought he was merely awaiting a favourable opportunity. Then a piece of news reached her which suggested a different explanation. Surprised by the fact that Marie Walewski, who had borne her elderly spouse a son, had not become pregnant, he had hurried to Eléonore and wrung from her the confession that Murat as well as he had been her lover.‡ This piece of good fortune restored Josephine's self-confidence. But scarcely had she congratulated herself on her escape when she received a visit from Fouché which shook it once more. The Minister of Police, solemn and bursting with self-importance, told her that he had taken it on himself to urge her to ask for the separation which Napoleon's fear of hurting her feelings had so far prevented him from suggesting. She knew her Fouché: a sheep in wolf's clothing, who had shown courage only once in his life, at the moment when Robespierre's baleful eye spied him.§

"You come from the Emperor?" she asked him.

* See note 175.
† See note 176.
‡ See note 177.
§ See note 178.

He protested that he did not, and assured her that this was an idea of his own, born out of the fulness of his joy in contemplating the meeting of the Emperors at Tilsit. His long, grey face, with its bulging eyes and drooping lids, became animated as he invited her in broken accents to sacrifice her wifehood to France and Napoleon. Fouché's emotion made no impression on Josephine. She refused to sign the document he had brought with him, telling him that she must have time to consider her answer.

A shrewd instinct informed her that Napoleon would be most reluctant to contract a second marriage unless he possessed some assurance that it was likely to be fruitful; but she was convinced at the same time that Fouché had obeyed orders. She concluded that her husband, while still under the illusion that Eléonore's son was indisputably his own, had asked the Emperor Alexander of Russia for the hand of his sister.* Shaken with grief, she took all her women into her confidence, and Madame de Rémusat, as usual, reported everything she heard to Talleyrand.† The sequel is disclosed in the following message from Metternich, the Austrian Ambassador, to his Government:

"The question of the marriage [between Napoleon and the Grand Duchess Catherine of Russia] seems, unfortunately, to gain more consistency every day. The reports of it are so general, the Empress herself speaks so openly about her divorce, that it is difficult not to believe that it has some foundation."

Josephine's reading of the situation was incorrect. The difficulty in which Napoleon found himself was not that he had promised to marry the Grand Duchess Catherine, but that she had never been offered to him. The lamentations of the Empress were therefore exactly what

* See note 179. † See note 180.

was needed to convince Metternich that his worst fears were about to be realized, and so to incline Austria to a complacent attitude towards the French plans in Spain. Having achieved his purpose without showing his hand, the Emperor, who had been avoiding his wife, was pleased one day to observe that her eyes were red and swollen and to ask her why. When she told him he flew into a great rage, and declared that Fouché should be punished for his presumption. But at the same time, by inviting her to express her own ideas about the proposal, he contrived to deepen the conviction that there was something in the wind. Josephine's reply, in spite of the fact that it had been suggested by Madame de Rémusat, and therefore owed its inspiration to Talleyrand and probably to Metternich also, had the same effect.

"I will never," she declared,* "take the first steps to bring about a change which must separate me from you. Our destiny has been so extraordinary that it has certainly been directed by Providence. I believe it would bring misfortunes on both of us if, of my own accord, I tried to separate my life from yours."

The truth about the Russian marriage remained hidden from her, but she soon realized that she had strong allies in Metternich, whose object was to prevent it, and in Talleyrand, whom Napoleon had just removed from the Foreign Office† because of his Austrian sympathies. Both these men were her husband's enemies, but this fact increased rather than diminished their attractiveness. Had she doubted that the Emperor's strength was her weakness, the attitude of the Buonapartes towards the Russian marriage would have convinced her. Fouché's proposal had put new heart into these foes, and Mama Letizia, back again in Paris, was

* See note 181.

† See note 182.

exerting herself to effect a reconciliation between Luciani and Napoleone. Josephine learned that the brothers were soon to meet in Italy, and that Giuseppe, now become King of Naples, was likely to join the party. She pleaded to be allowed to accompany her husband, saying that she was anxious to see her son Eugène again, but permission was refused.* For the first time, Napoleon made a tour of his empire unaccompanied by his wife. He created Eugène Prince of Venice, the title of the heir to the throne of Italy, which was taken as a sign that Josephine's son had been definitely excluded from the French succession, but his interview with Luciani was a failure. During the six weeks of his absence Josephine received only three letters. In the first of these he told her that he was "very pleased" with her son; in both the others he said that he would be "very glad" to see her again on his return. Such cold comfort was less agreeable than the courtly manners of M. de Metternich, Prince William of Prussia, the Prince of Coburg, the Princes of Mecklenburg, M. de Talleyrand, and the other members of the German party who attended her receptions and multiplied the assurances of their devotion.† This powerful faction inspired her with a sense of security, for she saw that, even if the worst came to the worst and the Russian marriage took place, the fact that she was identified with the friends of Austria would not harm her. Napoleon could not be less than generous to a wife whose sorrows were already a political counter in the hands of the most powerful of his enemies.

How shrewdly she had judged was shown by the peremptory orders she received from her husband on his return to see no more of these "foreigners."‡

* See note 183. † See note 184. ‡ See note 185.

## CHAPTER XXIII

## CONSPIRATORS

THREE months later Josephine learned that she was to accompany Napoleon to his meeting with the King and Queen of Spain at Bayonne. She interpreted the decision as an intimation that the Russian marriage was no longer on the cards, but was not sanguine enough to suppose that she had heard the last of it. With a gratitude for small mercies which never failed to touch Napoleon's heart, however he might distrust it, she prepared to enjoy herself, and, rubbing her little hands together in the most characteristic of all her gestures, hinted darkly to her women that there was more between the Emperor and herself than might be supposed. This cheerful mood was not nourished solely on anticipation. Josephine had actually visited Marie Walewski, who was now lodged in the Chausée d'Antin, and satisfied herself that that young woman was not pregnant.*

The journey to Bordeaux discovered the Emperor in excellent humour, occasioned by his belief that Spain was about to drop, like a ripe fruit, into his basket. She knew that this fresh prize had already been offered to Luigi and refused by him; but whatever regrets she may have felt that Hortense had lost so desirable a throne were offset by the rising exasperation of Napoleon against his brother, which promised a serious obstacle to Mama Letizia's attempts to reunite her fierce litter. When her husband left her at Bordeaux she experienced none of the anxieties which had assailed her at Mayence, and he

* See note 186.

had no longer any need to rebuke her tears. On the contrary, he wrote on April 17, 1808:

"It took me some time to understand your little jokes; I have laughed at your recollections. Oh, you women, what memories you have!

"My health is fairly good, and I love you most affectionately. I wish you to give my kind regards to everybody at Bordeaux; I have been too busy to send them to anybody."

Four days later he assured her: "Your letters always give me much pleasure." And two days after that sent for her to join him.

"BAYONNE,
"*April* 23, 1808.

"MY DEAR,

"A son* has been born to Hortense; I am highly delighted. I am not surprised that you tell me nothing of it, since your letter is dated the 21st, and the child was only born on the 20th, during the night.

"You can start on the 26th, sleep at Mont de Marsan, and arrive here on the 27th. Have your best dinner service sent on here on the 25th, in the evening. I have made arrangements for you to have a little house in the country, next to the one I have. My health is good.

"I am waiting for Charles IV. and his wife."

She did exactly as he told her, and he rewarded her by having guns fired along the whole Spanish frontier in honour of Hortense's new baby, a sign to the world that he looked on the child and its elder brother as his heirs. She soon realized that she had not been summoned merely to keep her husband company. He had work for her to do in diverting the King and Queen of Spain while he relieved them of their crowns. It was not a very pleasant job. Charles IV. was an imbecile wholly in his wife's hands; she, on the contrary, was guided

* See note 187.

by her appetites, which had long been fastened on Emmanuel Godoy, an ex-guardsman and a very notable scoundrel. These three had come to Bayonne together with the sole object of inducing Napoleon to avenge them on Ferdinand, the King's eldest son, who had just seized the throne. This was the Emperor's pretext for interference. Ferdinand had also come to Bayonne, but in his case the journey had been undertaken reluctantly and only because Spain was so full of French troops that a refusal of Napoleon's invitation was out of the question. The close proximity of the son who had deposed her and rough-handled Godoy into the bargain aroused Queen Maria Theresa to fury. For hours on end she exhausted Josephine with stories of Ferdinand's iniquities, and astonished her with expressions of a hope that Napoleon would put him to death. The King used to punctuate his wife's complaints by thumping on the floor with his walking-stick. Godoy was often present at these meetings, but his heavy features, which had earned him the nickname of "The Bull," afforded no clue to his thoughts. Josephine knew that Napoleon's plan was to compel Ferdinand to disgorge the crown and restore it to his father, who had already promised to hand it over as soon as he received it.

At last a family council took place. King Charles, stick in hand, wandered about the apartment, muttering curses on his son and blessings on the Emperor and Godoy, while Maria Theresa, her coarse features distorted with rage, hissed and fumed. The tall, hostile figure of Ferdinand, as great a rogue as his mother, but, for the moment, the idol of the Spaniards, afforded a curious contrast to those of the old people, but he, too, quickly lost his temper. Even Josephine's experience of family quarrels was soon at fault, for these Bourbons imparted a degree of hysterical passion to their disputes

to which the Buonapartes had never attained. Ferdinand wept violently when the moment arrived for parting with his usurped crown, and the spectacle of his tears powerfully excited both his father and mother. King Charles sprang at him and stood brandishing his stick in his face, while the Queen, anticipating her august sister in Wonderland, kept shouting: "Off with his head!" Only Godoy and Napoleon remained calm. With a thrill of admiration she could not withhold, Josephine heard her husband announce in business-like tones that the King and Queen and Godoy would go to live in Rome, that he had arranged to have Ferdinand looked after in France by M. de Talleyrand, and that the crown of Spain would now devolve on his own brother Joseph. Giuseppe's Neapolitan crown passed to Carlotta's husband, Murat, for his services in filling Spain with French troops and laying hold of Ferdinand. The Empress felt her spirits rising as she watched the travelling carriage, which was to carry Giuseppe and his wife to Madrid, disappear from sight. Soon the only Buonaparte left in Paris would be Mama Letizia.

But this joy, like so many others she had known, was not made of durable stuff. Before she and Napoleon had finished their tour of the South of France, which had begun on the day of Giuseppe's departure, the Spaniards,* in whose eyes the deal at Bayonne wore an ugly aspect, had broken out in revolt against their new King, and had compelled a large French army to lay down its arms in abject surrender. Giuseppe, it was reported, was returning from Madrid a great deal faster than he had gone there. Smiles withered like blossom in a spring frost.

"This means," said Napoleon grimly, "that I must conquer Spain or abandon it."

* See note 188.

She had no doubt which of these alternatives he would choose, and consequently beheld once more the spectre of the Russian marriage. It was obvious that, unless her husband could bind Alexander to him with stout ties, the Austrians would seize the opportunity afforded by a Spanish war to get some of their own back. Her fears were soon confirmed. Talleyrand awaited them at Nantes, and she heard that an immediate meeting with the Russian Emperor was Napoleon's most ardent wish.

The only crumb of comfort was the fact that Talleyrand had been chosen to make the arrangements, for he could be trusted to oppose the marriage. But the time had not yet arrived when anybody thought that this man was a match for Napoleon. She began to weep again, and on her return to St. Cloud resigned herself once more to the offices of Madame de La Rochefoucauld. Napoleon, moody and cheerful by turn, assured her that the object of his meeting with Alexander was political, not matrimonial;* but he refused to take her with him, in spite of the fact that social functions of the most elaborate and brilliant kind were to mark the occasion.

"I witnessed the tears my mother shed," says Hortense, "in thinking of this journey."

The Emperor left for Erfurt, where the meeting was to take place, on September 22, 1808. A day or two later the Parisian newspapers were full of descriptions of his junketings with Alexander and of assurances that the two Sovereigns loved each other like brothers. Josephine, on the contrary, received only a scrappy little note in which she was told that her spouse had a slight cold.

"I am well pleased with the Emperor [Alexander]," the letter continued, "and with everyone here. It is an hour after midnight, and I am tired. . . . Take care of yourself."

* See note 189.

Ten days later Napoleon "noted with pleasure" that his wife was well, and informed her:

"I assisted at the Weimar Ball. The Emperor Alexander dances, but not I. Forty years are forty years."

His final letter was a shade more genial:

"My Dear,

"I write you seldom. I am very busy. Conversations which last whole days and which do not improve my cold. Still, all goes well. I am pleased with Alexander; he ought to be with me. If he were a woman I think I should make him my sweetheart.

"I shall be back to you shortly; keep well and let me find you plump and rosy."

Was this the first hint? Josephine became violently agitated, expecting to hear daily that her fate was sealed. But when Napoleon came back nothing was said to encourage such a view. The Emperor's only interest seemed to be the Spanish War, and he expressed himself as satisfied that he could rely on Alexander while he was conducting it. He took his wife with him as far as Rambouillet. Just before they parted, Josephine, whose temper was a little frayed by her failure to find out what had happened at Erfurt, burst into tears.

"Will you never stop making war?" she asked.*

"Well," he replied, "do you think that I enjoy it? Don't you think I would rather stay peaceably where I have a good bed and a good dinner instead of facing all the hardships I have before me? You think I am made differently from other men? Then I can do other things besides wage war. But needs must. I owe a duty to France. It is not I who direct the course of events. I obey it."

His letters from the front were not more informing;

* See note 190.

enlightenment came from Madame de Rémusat, M. de Talleyrand, and Madame de Metternich, all of whom knew the inner history of the Erfurt meeting. The Austrian party made no attempt to hide the satisfaction they felt, and when Alexander of Russia married his sister Catherine to the Duke of Oldenburg their joy overflowed. Josephine perceived that the Russian marriage had been a bluff. She learned, further, that her husband's royal "sweetheart" was growing more coy every day. If Alexander still pretended to go with Napoleon, it was only because he had fish of his own to fry. The news that he had given his consent to a marriage between M. de Talleyrand's nephew and one of his own relatives—a real Russian marriage this—sufficiently indicated that if Austria attacked France the Russian cock would not fight.

Preparations for war, the Empress heard, were being pushed forward in Vienna so as to catch Napoleon while his hands were still full with the Spanish business; and since the best of the French troops were on the other side of the Pyrenees, the most confident hopes seemed to be justified. She became much alarmed, and, in her fear, drew still closer to the Austrians. M. de Talleyrand, bland and sneering,* hobbled about her anterooms whispering anecdotes of his secret intercourse with Alexander of Russia at Erfurt. This strange being, who had dragged his twisted foot through the galleries of Versailles in the reign of King Louis, exercised a great influence on her. She believed him when he hinted that some Spanish assassin would probably soon bring Napoleon's life to an end, or that, failing this, the Emperor would be beaten to his knees by the Austrians. What did Talleyrand think she ought to do? He only shrugged his high shoulders. He himself was keeping in

* See note 191.

close touch with M. de Metternich. M. de Metternich and his wife were not, of course, less confident that the Emperor's star was sinking, but the final confirmation came from Fouché. One day the Minister of Police, whose adherence to the Russian party had been so zealous, joined the party of Austria and appeared arm-in-arm with his chief enemy, Talleyrand. Josephine doubted no longer that the Napoleonic Empire was on the rocks. The rats were leaving the sinking ship.

Where were they going? Murat's name was mentioned as a possible successor to the throne, but Josephine was not so foolish as to believe that that swashbuckler, with Carlotta by his side, would be capable of guiding the hurricane which had engulfed Napoleon. No, if the Emperor fell, the Bourbons would return. She had that idea in her mind when, good news having arrived from Spain, a deputation of the *Corps Législatif* came to congratulate her on her husband's victories.

"I have no doubt," she told the deputation, breaking for the first time the rule that she should not speak of Napoleon, "that his Majesty will be very sensible of the homage of an assembly which represents the nation."

This reply evoked lively astonishment, for, according to the Constitution, the *Corps Législatif* did not represent the nation; it was the Emperor alone who did that. Was the Empress actually hinting that the nation could dispose of itself behind the back of the man who never stopped making war? This was the language which Talleyrand and Fouché were holding and which it was M. de Metternich's chief concern to encourage:

"We have at last," wrote that agreeable and cold-blooded man, "reached the time when allies seem to offer themselves from the very heart of the French Empire."*

* See note 192.

Josephine conceived that her interests would be best served by the plotters. Since Napoleon had shown himself ready to cast her aside at the bidding of policy, why should not she cast him aside at the same bidding? Under the Bourbons, if she helped them to recover their throne, her future would be secure.* Nevertheless, to safeguard herself, she wrote an anxious letter to her husband, full of the everyday gossip of Paris. His answer bade her cease to trouble:

"*January* 1, 1809.

"Moustache brings me your letter of December 31. I see from it, dear, that you are sad and have very gloomy disquietudes. Austria will not make war on me; if she does, I have 150,000 men in Germany and as many on the Rhine and 400,000 Germans to reply to her. Russia will not separate herself from me. They are foolish in Paris.

"I shall be at Paris the moment I think it worth while. I advise you to beware of ghosts. One fine day at two o'clock in the morning! But adieu, dear. I am well and am yours ever,

"NAPOLEON."

Was he living in a fool's paradise? At any rate, it was clear that he had no suspicion that trouble was brewing for him in his own capital. What use would his troops be if the nation of its own accord made peace with Austria? Still, she could not help feeling somewhat anxious when she learned that, in addition to conquering Spain and restoring Giuseppe to his lost throne, he had driven the English army of Sir John Moore into the sea. Suppose that, after all, he managed to outride the hurricane?

One day, while the plotters were maturing their plans and congratulating themselves that he was still campaigning on the Portuguese coast, Napoleon drove into Paris. A single glance at his face told Josephine that he

* See note 193.

knew everything. But she suffered no reproaches; these had been reserved for M. de Talleyrand. She listened, a few days later, to Madame de Rémusat's account of the interview between the Emperor and the minister who had betrayed him.

Soon afterwards her husband rebuked her publicly in the columns of his official newspaper, the *Moniteur,* for her speech to the deputation of the *Corps Legislatif.*

> "The Empress," he announced in menacing words, "knows the law too well not to be aware that the Emperor is the chief representative of the nation, and that, after him, comes the Senate, and then the *Corps Legislatif.* . . . It would be a wild and even criminal assertion to try to represent the nation before the Emperor."

He could not have used stronger language nor intimated more plainly that he knew that his wife had been party to the conspiracy against him. But this intimation did not satisfy him. At the Empress's next reception he took the unusual course of supplying her and Hortense with a list of the people with whom they were to play whist.* The name of M. de Metternich, one of their usual partners, was not included, and so the Austrian Ambassador was compelled to seat himself among the waiting women.

Josephine heard no more about the conspiracy. To all appearances her husband had forgiven her, for he made use of her, as usual, to further his plans. She was instructed to be specially kind to M. Kourakin, the Russian Ambassador, and to show herself in Paris. She was not even forbidden to receive M. de Talleyrand, who, in spite of the abuse heaped on him, continued to hobble about the Court. Had vengeance been deferred until the issue of the coming war with Austria should be

* See note 194.

known? That war was in everybody's thoughts and engaged everybody's anxiety, for, whatever he might profess, Napoleon was likely to have to fight at a disadvantage, seeing that the Spaniards were still formidable, and that, consequently, troops could not be withdrawn from Spain. The more gentle the Emperor showed himself towards his wife, the more uneasy she must have felt. He was under the weather at the moment, but what would he be like if, by another of his strokes of genius, he managed to scatter his enemies?

February passed without untoward incident. At the beginning of March, Hortense's elder son was created Grand Duke of Berg in succession to Murat, who had relinquished that principality on becoming King of Naples. Was this a mark of favour?

## CHAPTER XXIV

## THE END OF THE ROAD

JOSEPHINE was determined to accompany her husband to the Austrian campaign, but she kept her plan to herself. News that the enemy had crossed the frontier reached Paris late on the night of April 12, 1809, and she soon learned that the Emperor had ordered his travelling carriage for 4 a.m. the following day. She was waiting for him when he appeared from his apartments.

"You cannot possibly go," he declared, "the journey is too long and will be too fatiguing for you."*

She protested that she did not mind the fatigue.

"But I am going off now."

"Well, I'm quite ready."

As usual he hesitated. The temptation to have her with him was still very great.

"You'll want a great deal of luggage," he objected.

"Everything is packed."

He consented and she took her place beside him. She knew how to amuse him and he felt grateful to her. But when he left her at Strasbourg she seems to have felt that the old intimacy had been shaken. Napoleon's bitterness revealed itself in the praises which he heaped on Eugène, who was leading the French army in Italy and who had informed his stepfather about the Paris plotters.† Her son had set her an example in fidelity which she had not followed; she must have recalled that it was his service with Napoleon in Egypt which had saved her from the consequences of her affair with Hippolyte Charles. She

* See note 195. † See note 196.

fell into depression as soon as she was left alone, and this was by no means lightened when the news that once again her husband was driving his enemies before him like sheep reached her. Napoleon at bay and Napoleon triumphant were, as she had learned, different beings, The few letters she received from him breathed an exulting and defiant spirit:

"*May* 9, 1809.

"To-morrow I shall be before Vienna; it will be exactly a month to the day after the Austrians crossed the Inn and violated peace."

"*May* 12, 1809.

". . . I am master of Vienna and everything here goes perfectly."

What a dismal business her flirtation with the Austrians seemed. Hortense had joined her with Napoleon-Louis and Louis-Napoleon, but soon took her children across the frontier to Baden on the plea that her doctor had ordered her to drink the waters. At this moment the first exaggerated reports of Napoleon's defeat at the Battle of Aspern-Essling reached Strasbourg.*

Josephine was emboldened to write to her husband asking for permission to join her daughter at the Spa. Her gloom gave place to expectancy, for she believed that if the campaign ended otherwise than in complete triumph she was safe. Napoleon, victorious, might compel one of the reigning families to give him a daughter without incurring the risk of being accused of weakness, but this accusation would inevitably attend a royal marriage entered into on the morrow of defeat. Her judgment found sanction in the cordial tones of the next letter she received:

* See note 197.

"EBERSDORF,
"*May* 27, 1809.

"I am despatching a page to tell you that Eugène has rejoined me with all his army, and that he has completely performed the task with which I entrusted him, and has almost entirely destroyed the enemy's army opposed to him.

"I send you my proclamation to the army of Italy, which will explain this to you.

"I am very well.

"Yours ever,
"NAPOLEON.

"P.S.—You can have this proclamation printed at Strasbourg and have it translated into French and German [it was written in Italian] in order that it may be broadcast over Germany. Give a copy of the proclamation to the page, who goes on to Paris."

The bearer of this letter told her that the Emperor had gone out to meet her son and had embraced him in the sight of the armies. It was obvious that Eugène's victory was being used to offset Napoleon's reverse, and Josephine would have been less than human had she not experienced a thrill of pride. But she was speedily warned not to presume too far on a mere stroke of luck. A letter arrived from the Emperor for Hortense; she opened it and read:

"MY DAUGHTER,

"I am seriously annoyed that you have left France without my permission, and especially that you have taken my nephews out [of France]. Since you are at Baden stay there, but an hour after receiving this letter send my two nephews back to Strasbourg to be near the Empress—they ought never to go out of France.

"It is the first time I have had reason to be annoyed with you, but you should not dispose of my nephews without my permission; you should realize what a bad effect it will have.

"Since the waters at Baden are doing you good you can stay

there a few days, but, I repeat, lose not a moment in sending my nephews back to Strasbourg.

"Your affectionate father,

"NAPOLEON."

The children had already been sent back to their grandmother on the first news of the Battle of Aspern-Essling, so that no political significance could attach to their absence from France. Nevertheless, Josephine was plunged again into dismay by this fresh proof of the liveliness of her husband's suspicions. She forwarded the letter to her daughter with a covering note, in which she urged her to lose no time in pacifying him, and added fearfully: "I hope he will not be equally vexed with me for your being at Baden."

The pleasure she had experienced in Eugène's victory was wholly extinguished, and she returned to the state of tormenting anxiety, in which her only preoccupation was news from her husband. He wrote to her again on May 31, 1809, in answer to the letter in which she had asked leave to join Hortense:

"You can go to Plombières. I do not care for you to go to Baden; it is not necessary to leave France."

She tried to assure herself that his style was no harsher than usual, but the letters which reached her once a week after this gave her small comfort.

"SCHOENBRUNN,

"*June* 9, 1809.

"I see with pleasure that you are going to the waters of Plombières; they will do you good.

"Eugène is in Hungary with his army. I am well; the weather very fine. I note with pleasure that Hortense and the Duke of Berg [Napoleon-Louis] are in France.

"Adieu, dear,

"Your lover,

"NAPOLEON."

"SCHOENBRUNN,
"*June* 16, 1809.

"I send a page to tell you that on the 14th, the anniversary of Marengo, Eugène won a battle against the Archduke John and the Archduke Palatine at Raab, in Hungary, that he has taken 3,000 men, many pieces of cannon, 4 flags, and pursued them a long way on the road to Budapest.

"NAPOLEON."

It was impossible not to be struck by these constant references to Eugène and his doings. Was he preparing her mind for the day when her son would be all that was left to her? She seemed to hear him telling her that she was lucky to possess so fine a boy, and need not therefore be pitied if she lost a husband for whom she had shown so little affection.

"I have your letter, which tells me of your departure for Plombières," he wrote. "I am glad you are taking this journey because I trust it may do you good.

"Eugène is in Hungary and is well. My health is very good and the army in fighting trim.

"I am very glad to know that the Grand Duke of Berg is with you.

"Adieu, dear. You know my affection for my Josephine; it never varies.

"Yours ever,
"NAPOLEON."

What comfort could she extract from such a letter? If he never lost a chance of mentioning Eugène favourably, he never forgot to rub in the mistake which she and Hortense had made. Weary of trying to discover her fate, she resigned herself once again to the baths and douches so famous as stimulants of maternity. Alas! what could these achieve for a woman nearing fifty years of age? But while she bathed she kept as closely in touch with Paris as did Napoleon himself. The Battle of

Aspern-Essling had made a bad impression in the capital, and she learned that Fouché and Talleyrand, on the first receipt of the news, had hesitated whether or not to seize power and summon King Louis XVIII. back to the kingdom of his fathers. Now that it was apparent that the Emperor had to some extent retrieved his position, they were again waiting and watching. In these circumstances it seemed prudent to remain for a time at Plombières.

She was soon furnished with reason of thankfulness that she had come to this decision. Eclipsed for a moment on the Danube, the star of Napoleon blazed forth again at Wagram. He wrote to her, as usual from the battlefield, in the hour of his triumph.

"EBERSDORF,
"*July* 7, 1809, 5 a.m.

"I am despatching a page to bring you the good tidings of the victory of Enzersdorf, which I won on the 5th, and that of Wagram, which I won on the 6th.

"The enemy flees in disorder and all goes according to my prayers.

"Eugène is well. . . . My losses are full heavy, but the victory is decisive and complete. We have taken more than 100 pieces of cannon, 12 flags, many prisoners.

"I am sunburnt.

"Adieu, dear; I send you a kiss. Kind regards to Hortense.

"NAPOLEON."

One kiss! In Italy he had sent her millions. Two days later he wrote again.

"WALKERSDORF,
"*July* 9, 1809, 2 a.m.

"MY DEAR,

"All goes here as I wish. My enemies are defeated, beaten, utterly routed. They were in great numbers; I have wiped them out. To-day my health is good; yesterday I was

rather ill with a surfeit of bile, occasioned by so many hardships, but it has done me much good.

"Adieu, dear. I am in excellent health.

"NAPOLEON."

So this was the end of the war to end Napoleon. Josephine must have found fresh cause of anxiety in the very words he employed—"defeated, beaten, utterly routed . . . . I have wiped them out." Where were her daws, Talleyrand, Fouché, Metternich, who had thought to strike at the eagle? The same triumphant note informed his next letter.

"IN THE CAMP BEFORE ZNAIM,
"*July* 13, 1809.

"I send you the suspension of arms concluded yesterday with the Austrian general. Eugène is on the Hungary side and is well. . . .

"I send you a kiss, and am very well.

"NAPOLEON."

Would he invite her to stay with him at Schoenbrunn while the peace negotiations were in progress? For an instant she cherished that hope when, on July 17, he wrote:

"Eugène is well and I long to know that you, as well as Hortense, are the same.

"Give a kiss for me to Monsieur the Grand Duke of Berg."

She had already sent him a letter suggesting, artfully, that when her treatment ended she thought of going back to Malmaison if this was agreeable to him. But his reply, dated the 24th, shattered all her illusions.

"I note with pleasure," he wrote, "that the waters are doing you good. I see no objection to your going back to Malmaison after you have finished your treatment. It is hot enough here, in all conscience."

The final blow fell a day or two later when she learned that he had summoned the Polish girl, Marie Walewski, from Paris and given her a house in the grounds of the royal palace.* Fear, anger, jealousy, despair, made hurricane in her spirit.

"I see from your letter," came his laconic reply to her outburst of indignation, "that you are at Plombières and intend to stay there. You do well; the waters and the fine climate can only do you good.

"I remain here. My health and my affairs follow my wishes.

"Please give my kind regards to Hortense and the Napoleons.

"Yours ever,
"NAPOLEON."

Did he no longer care what she did or where she went? She wrote again, saying that she had decided after all to leave the Spa, where the weather was very bad. Perhaps she would go to Paris, perhaps to Malmaison. Her tortured mind conceived, perhaps, that if she mentioned both these places he would be drawn into suggesting some plan for her, as he had done when she returned home from Mayence. If he ordered her to hold receptions or show herself in public she would know that he had not wholly abandoned her. She did not await his reply before beginning her journey. It reached her at Malmaison.

"SCHOENBRUNN,
"*August* 21, 1809.

"I have received your letter of August 14 from Plombières. I see from it that, by the 18th, you will be either at Paris or Malmaison. The heat, which is very great here, will have upset you. Malmaison must be very dry and parched at this time of year.

* See note 198.

"My health is good. The heat, however, has brought on a slight cartarrh.

"Adieu, dear.

"NAPOLEON."

He had no orders for her, no further use for her services. Broken in spirit, she threw herself on his mercy, telling him that she was ill with grief and even hinting at what she knew about his love affair.

"I have your letter from Malmaison," he replied. "They bring me word that you are plump, florid, and in the best of health. I assure you Vienna is not an amusing city. I would very much rather be back again in Paris."

She recognized the hand of Fouché in this untrue report of her condition.* That cringing plotter, now frightened out of his wits, was, she realized, trying to climb back over her shoulders to the favour of the master he had betrayed. Knowing, probably, that the Emperor had abandoned her, he was supplying the means of discounting her appeals.

"I have had no letter from you for several days," Napoleon wrote under date Schoenbrunn, August 31, 1809; "the pleasures of Malmaison, the beautiful greenhouses, the beautiful gardens, cause the absent to be forgotten. It is, they say, the rule of your sex. Everyone speaks only of your good health; all this is very suspicious.

"To-morrow I am off with Eugène for two days in Hungary.

"My health is fairly good.

"Adieu, dear.

"Yours ever,

"NAPOLEON."

She understood only too well what he meant, but there remained to her still a single ray of comfort. Would he divorce her while he remained doubtful of his

* See note 199.

own fertility? Alas! even that support crumbled while she leaned on it. She was told that Marie Walewski had become pregnant at Schoenbrunn. Divorce was on the doorstep. His next letter warned her that her time was at hand.

"KREMS,
"*September* 9, 1809.

"MY DEAR,

"I arrived here yesterday at 2 a.m. I have come here to see my troops. My health has never been better. I know that you are very well.

"I shall be in Paris at a moment when nobody will expect me."

Josephine prepared for the last encounter with such courage and resource as remained to her. Her first step was to write saying that her health had improved. Her second to ask him for money to buy a house adjoining Malmaison—a good way, as she doubtless conceived, of finding out what he meant to do for her in the future.

"I have received your letter of the 16th," he replied under date Schoenbrunn, September 23, 1809. "I note that you are well. The old maid's house* is only worth 120,000 francs; they will never get more for it. Still, I leave you mistress to do what you like, since it amuses you; only, once bought, don't pull it down to put up a rockery there.

"Adieu, dear.

"NAPOLEON."

This was better than might have been expected. He would be generous. A rumour was circulating in Paris that cholera had broken out among the troops in Austria; she sent Dr. Corvisart off to her husband and wrote to say how anxious she was; steps which she told herself could not fail to touch his heart. She was not mistaken.

* See note 200.

"SCHOENBRUNN,
"*September* 25, 1809.

"I have received your letter. Be careful, and I advise you to be vigilant, for one of these nights you will hear a loud knocking.

"My health is good. I know nothing about the rumours; I have never been better for many a long year. Corvisart was no use to me.

"Adieu, dear; everything here prospers.

"Yours ever,
"NAPOLEON."

He had not written so genially for months.

## CHAPTER XXV

## DIVORCE

The weakness of Napoleon lay in his fear of seeming to be weak; he was wont to ask of Fortune all her favours or none of them. Josephine, on the contrary, ever shaped her course on the principle that half a loaf is better than no bread. Since divorce was unavoidable, she was determined to get as much out of it as possible.

She did not underestimate the difficulties which attended her enterprise; in all the negotiations with her husband she was bound to be handicapped by her friendship with the Metternichs. Napoleon left her in no doubt on this subject, as his letter of October 14, 1809, shows.

"My Dear,

"I write to advise you that peace was signed two hours ago between Champagny and Prince Metternich.

"Adieu, dear.

"Napoleon."

So much for Metternich. So much for Talleyrand. So much for Fouché. He had whipped them all.

"Nymphenburg, near Munich,
"*October* 21, 1809.

"I arrived here yesterday in the best of health, but shall not start till to-morrow. I shall spend a day at Stuttgart. You will be advised twenty-four hours in advance of my arrival at Fontainebleau.

"I look forward with pleasure to seeing you again, and I await that moment impatiently.

"I send you a kiss.

"Yours ever,
"Napoleon."

It was the third kiss he had sent her since the campaign began; the last he would ever send. At the hangman's step the strongest spirit is apt to quail. She felt that she could not face the ordeal, especially as it was at Fontainebleau that her marriage to Alexander de Beauharnais had suffered its eclipse. She began to consider wildly how she might escape. At the height of her anguish another letter reached her.

"MUNICH,
"*October* 22, 1809.

"MY DEAR,

"I start in an hour. I shall be at Fontainebleau from the 26th to the 27th; you may meet me there with some of your ladies."

She decided not to go, and then changed her mind. But as the moment of departure arrived she shrank back once more and remained in abject sorrow, deaf to the entreaties of Hortense and her women.* They overcame her distress only when it was too late to reach Fontainebleau before the Emperor, for whose reception no preparations of any kind had been made. The carriages stopped. With tear-stained, expressionless face the Empress ascended the stairs. The storm broke.

Napoleon was paler than usual; what blood remained in his cheeks left them before he exhausted his reproaches.† Josephine heard him with bowed head, and then, choking with sobs and trembling violently, was led away to her apartments. The prostration she had certainly foreseen followed his outburst. He had keyed himself up to tell her his intentions calmly and kindly, but her late arrival had imposed too great a strain on a nature incapable of waiting. Now he found himself with the inevitable consequences of his violence on his

* See note 201. † See note 202.

hands. Josephine was not likely to forego such an advantage, and he experienced the liveliest uneasiness as he contemplated the uses to which she would put it. He kept away from her for a day or two and spent all his time with Paolina,* who tried to reanimate his courage. They drove out together and had their meals together, while Josephine wept without ceasing behind closed doors. Even Hortense had not witnessed so many tears.

A fortnight slipped by and still not a word had been spoken about divorce. On a few occasions Napoleon came to see his wife, but the hurricane of her lamentations drove him away before he dared to utter a syllable. Unable to speak and ashamed of the ridiculous figure he was cutting, he resolved to go to Paris, and, accordingly, on November 14, 1809, the Court returned to the Tuileries. But things were no better here than they had been at Fontainebleau. The sight of her husband threw the Empress' nerves into such commotion that hours were necessary to effect their easement. When another fortnight had passed, Napoleon was no nearer a solution of his trouble than he had been on his return from Austria. He grew frantic, and declared that there was no price he was not ready to pay for escape from so humiliating a position.

This was the moment for which Josephine had been waiting. She grew calmer and tempered her sorrow with a resignation rendered tragic by her distressful looks. On the evening of November 30 she dined alone with her husband. Neither spoke during the meal, but she held her tears in leash. When coffee had been served he conducted her to her drawing-room and closed the door.

"Josephine, my excellent Josephine," he cried hys-

* See note 203.

terically. "You know if I have loved you. To you, to you alone I owe the only moments of happiness I have enjoyed in this world. Josephine, my destiny overmasters my will. My dearest affections must be silent before the interests of France. . . ."

He had prepared more of the same sort of discourse, but a piercing scream drove it from his mind. Josephine cast herself on the floor, shrieking and sobbing.

"I shall not survive it. . . . I shall not survive it. . . ."

The sweat leaped to his brow. He knelt beside her and tried the effect of a further dose of his fine speech, but she only screamed the more. He opened the door of the room and called the usher to help him.

"Are you strong enough," he asked Bausset,* "to lift Josephine and carry her to her apartments by the private staircase communicating with her room, so that she may have all the care and attention her state requires?"

"Yes, sire."

Bausset lifted the shrieking woman while Napoleon took a candlestick from the table and led the way to the head of the staircase. When they reached it the usher pointed out that it was too narrow for him to descend without running the risk of a fall. Napoleon called an attendant, gave him the candle, and took hold himself of Josephine's legs. They scrambled down a few steps. Suddenly Bausset heard a soft voice whisper:

"You're holding me too tight."

He realized that there was nothing to be alarmed about. The Emperor, however, was in a pitiable plight.

"His agitation and anxiety," says Bausset, "were extreme. In his trouble he told me the cause of all that had occurred. His words came out with difficulty and

* See note 204.

without sequence; his voice was choked and his eyes were full of tears."

He wept again the next day when telling Hortense what had happened, and, on hearing that Josephine's son and daughter proposed to accompany their mother into obscurity, broke down altogether.*

"What! All of you leave me!" he cried in a broken voice. "You will desert me! Don't you love me any longer? If it were my happiness I would sacrifice it to you. But it is the good of France. Pity me rather for being obliged to sacrifice my most cherished affections."

Hortense wept also. She and Napoleon then visited Josephine. In fact, however, all three were manœuvring for position and all three knew it very well. Josephine had no fear now of being sent forth naked into an inhospitable world; but, as her undisclosed debts were enormous, she had big demands to bring forward. Hortense wished to secure her own and her brother's future, to say nothing of the future of her children. As for Napoleon, he was so agitated and so demoralized by the month he had spent in this valley of lamentation that all he asked for was a speedy issue of the business. That was denied him. As Hortense observes: "Every day brought new conflicts."†

Eugène was sent for. He repeated what his sister had said about going into obscurity with their excellent mother. The Emperor, now more demoralized than ever, for Josephine wept and screamed and swooned by turns, gave way to violent emotion. He protested anew that he would not be left alone, and became so hysterical that it was necessary to pacify him. In this mood, at long last, he made known what he was prepared to do. Josephine, he stated, was to keep her imperial and royal title and rank. He was ready to fix her jointure at an

* See note 205. † See note 206.

annual revenue of £80,000 from the public Treasury, and, in addition, she would have £40,000 a year from his privy purse.

"We were won over by the Emperor's solicitude for his wife's reputation," says Hortense. "Already we were prepared to accept the new position which placed us on an equality with the crowd that we had seen at our feet and reduced us to be of no account where once we had been so influential."*

That observation, so remote from reality, sufficiently indicates the outlook of Josephine and her children. But sympathy cannot be withheld; the Buonapartes were about to triumph. These amiable Corsicans could be relied on to enjoy every moment of the events which were soon to take place. Josephine dried her tears and resolved, with admirable judgment, to play the part of the aristocrat in the tumbril. The celebrations of the peace with Austria were at hand. She put on her crown and went with Napoleon to hear the *Te Deum* in Notre-Dame. She attended the official receptions. Paris, always quick to apprehend emotional tension, demonstrated its sympathy. The end was better than the beginning.

"I can never forget," says Pasquier, "the evening on which the discarded Empress did the honours of her Court for the last time. . . . A great throng was present and supper was served, according to custom, in the gallery of Diana on a number of little tables. Josephine sat at the centre one, and the men went round her waiting for that particularly graceful nod which she was in the habit of bestowing on those with whom she was acquainted. I stood at a short distance from her for a few minutes, and I could not help being struck with the perfection of her attitude in the presence of all these people who still did her homage, while knowing full well that it was for the last time; that in an hour she would descend from the throne, and leave the palace never to re-enter it. Only women

* See note 207.

can rise superior to the difficulties of such a situation, but I have my doubts as to whether a second one could have been found to do it with such perfect grace and composure. Napoleon did not show as bold a front as did his victim."

It is impossible not to admire Josephine's behaviour on the day when her foes finally prevailed against her. They were all there; Mama Letizia, stern and hard as ever; Carlotta, worsted in many a previous encounter but well able now to afford a few malicious tears; pretty Paolina, a little faded by her debaucheries; Luigi with his dyspeptic smile; the young Jeromini, King of Westphalia. Napoleon, who had been alone with his wife, hastened, as soon as the family had assembled, to read his speech. He announced to his mother and sisters that Josephine had adorned fifteen years of his life, the memory of which would always remain inscribed in his heart. Tears blinded him and he kept swallowing his sobs. But Josephine listened without flinching. Her hand rested on the arm of her son. Hortense stood beside her. When the Emperor had finished she took up the paper on which her speech was written. Her voice failed a little and she handed the paper to Count Regnaud, who read it for her to the end, although he, too, was weeping. Then Napoleon embraced her and led her out of the room. The rest of the day was spent in tears, which Hortense succeeded in drying for a short time by an allusion to the circumstance that Marie Antoinette had left the Tuileries to mount the scaffold.*

The Emperor paid a final visit the next afternoon, descending to Josephine's apartments by the private staircase. When she saw him she flung herself into his arms. He pressed her to his breast and kissed her many times, but she fainted.†

At 2 p.m., Josephine came down the great staircase of

* See note 208. † See note 209.

the palace for the last time. Not only were her women gathered around her, the domestics had come crowding up from the kitchens and offices to bid her farewell. Everybody was weeping, and the moment marks the high water of this memorable flood of tears. These household servants represented quite faithfully the feelings and opinions of the nation at large. Paris, and France, too, was sorry to see Josephine go. It had grown accustomed to her and had established with her those relations which unite well-known characters to the public. People believed her to be kind, good-humoured, and deeply in love with Napoleon. She was still, to most of them, "Our Lady of Victories." The good Parisians shook their heads at a policy which separated Napoleon from Josephine. The attitude was not dissimilar from that with which the mass of mankind anywhere hears of the dissolution of a popular theatrical partnership. Josephine belonged to the "Napoleon troupe," and the troupe could never be complete without her. It might not even be amusing without her, for, with all her faults, she was human; her lamentations no less than her largesse had become part of the life of the capital.

There was another consideration which some of the courtiers remarked. Napoleon's application of the purge of virtue had stopped short at his wife. Josephine represented the old Eve in the new Eden. Her backslidings had softened the asperity of her husband's rule, while her agreeable taint of disrepute had added flavour to many a dull day. Henceforth the Court, like the Camp, would be disciplined by its master.

She took her seat beside her daughter in the carriage known as "L'Opale,"* and sank back exhausted on the cushions. The heavens joined their tears to those of men and women. Paris had seldom known a wetter day.

* See note 210.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### NAVARRE

Two hours later Napoleon left the palace for the Trianon. The December day had faded miserably and darkness was added to desolation. When he reached his destination he was worn out and his wits were scattered. Next morning he rushed off to see how Josephine was faring at Malmaison. She, too, had had a bad night, worse even than his, for she had "rambled" in her sleep. They met with such feelings of relief as astonished them both. Hours were spent walking aimlessly about the grounds in the rain, and the devoted pair were separated with difficulty.

"My dear," he wrote as soon as he returned to the Trianon, "I found you to-day weaker than you ought to be. You have shown courage; it is necessary that you should maintain it and not give way to doleful melancholy. You must be contented to take special care of your health, which is so precious to me. If you are attached to me and if you love me you should show strength of mind and force yourself to be happy. You cannot question my constant and tender friendship and you would know, very imperfectly, all the affection I have for you if you imagined I can be happy if you are unhappy and contented if you are ill at ease.

"Adieu, dear; sleep well. Dream that I wish it."

This instance of the pot calling the kettle black gave Josephine much comfort. Her husband tried in the days which followed to escape from his melancholy and resist his demoralization by hunting. He sent one of the stags he killed to Josephine. On Christmas Day the ex-Em-

press and Hortense visited him. Carlotta was with him. He insisted that they should stay to dinner. As usual, he sat opposite to Josephine. Nothing seemed changed. But no one could utter a word or eat a bite. Before the meal ended he wept.*

Such scenes could not be repeated if people were to keep their reason. He had to lie down after Josephine and Hortense left him. The first signs of the inevitable reaction began to manifest themselves in a desire to get back to work. But the visit which he paid to Paris two days later renewed his distresses. He wrote to Josephine:

"*December 27*, 1809.

"I have been thoroughly tired in revisiting the Tuileries; that great palace seemed empty to me and I felt lost in it."

Josephine had only one wish now—namely, to return to Paris and establish herself there. She devoted her whole attention to the realization of this project, and, as a preliminary move, sent Eugène to Napoleon with a harrowing tale of her distress. The point which her son was to dwell upon was her loneliness. She got an encouraging reply to the effect that a house was vacant in Paris, the Elysée, and that the Emperor hoped to come again to see her. Second thoughts, however, made Napoleon wish that he had not mentioned the vacant house. As his mood of demoralization began to pass and his reason to assert itself once more, the inconvenience and even danger of having Josephine installed in an establishment of her own in his capital presented itself to his mind. Her house would inevitably become the meeting-place of his enemies and a centre of gossip. He gave hurried orders to his courtiers to visit the Empress at Malmaison and so far as possible induce in her mind a feeling of contentment.

* See note 211.

"Hortense, whom I saw this afternoon," he wrote to her on January 4, 1810, "has given me news of you. I trust that you will have been able to see your plants to-day, the weather having been fine. . . ."

Josephine knew very well what this tactful reference to the plants meant, and was not deceived about the significance of the immense stream of visitors who came crowding out from Paris to see her. She realized that once again she must buckle on her armour.

"I wished to come and see you to-day," he wrote the following evening, "but I cannot; it will be, I hope, in the morning. It is a long time since I heard from you. I learned with pleasure that you take walks in your garden these cold days.

"Adieu, dear; keep well and never doubt my affection."

He came the next morning, and she received him with so much delight that he lingered. But she had her tears ready for the moment when he began to talk about the country house (Navarre), which she knew he was preparing for her. If he would only allow her to live quietly in Paris she would promise not to give him any trouble. Murmuring vague promises, he went away. The next day he wrote:

"*Sunday,* 8 p.m., 1810.

"I was very glad to see you yesterday; I feel what charms your society has for me. . . .

"I have allowed £4,000 for 1810 for the extraordinary expenses at Malmaison. You can therefore do as much planting as you like; you will distribute the sum as you may require. I have instructed Estève to send you £8,000 the moment the contract for the Maison Julien* shall be made. I have ordered them to pay for your *parure* of rubies, which will be valued by the Department, for I do not wish to be robbed by jewellers. So there goes the £16,000 that this may cost me.

* See note 212.

"I have ordered them to hold the £40,000 which the civil list owes you for 1810 at the disposal of your man of business in order to pay your debts.

"You should find in the coffers of Malmaison £20,000 to £25,000; you can take them to buy your plate and linen.

"I have instructed them to make you a very fine porcelain service; they will take your commands in order that it may be a very fine one.

"NAPOLEON."

Paying debts, in Josephine's opinion, was the poorest way of spending money. She was exceedingly angry when she realized that Napoleon meant to make an honest woman of her out of her own pocket, especially as her liabilities exceeded £50,000. Was she to get no civil list money for a year and a half? But even this exasperation was less than the imprisonment at Malmaison, with Navarre in the background, which he was forcing on her. She wrote him a letter, in the course of which she asked permission to receive his brother Jeromini, the King of Westphalia.

"My dear," he replied, "I see no objection to your receiving the King of Westphalia whenever you wish. The King and Queen of Bavaria will probably come to see you on Friday.

"I long to come to Malmaison, but you must really show fortitude and self-restraint; the page on duty this morning told me that he saw you weeping.

"I am going to dine quite alone.

"Adieu, dear. Never doubt the depth of my feelings for you. You would be unjust and unfair if you did.

"NAPOLEON."

How well she knew him in this mood! Thankful that she retained the power to upset him, she followed up her advantage with such effect that on January 17 he wrote:

"Dr. Audenarde, whom I sent to you this morning, tells me that since you have been at Malmaison you have no longer any courage. Yet that place is full of our happy memories which can, and ought, never to change, at least on my side.

"I want badly to see you, but I must have some assurance that you are strong and not weak; I, too, am rather like you, and it makes me frightfully wretched. . . .

"Adieu, Josephine. Good-night. If you doubted me you would be very ungrateful."

What he wanted to see her about was his plan of a marriage with the Austrian Archduchess Marie Louise, for it had occurred to his curiously practical and economical mind to make use of her friendship with Madame de Metternich. He drove out to Malmaison on Thursday, January 18, and told her what was in his mind. She seems to have extracted a promise from him to allow her to return to Paris.

He had scarcely gone again before she heard that it had been finally decided to banish her to Navarre. Screaming that she would rather die than consent to such treatment, she swooned in the arms of her women.

"I hear you are making yourself miserable," he wrote angrily. "This is too bad. You have no confidence in me and all the rumours that are being spread excite you. This is not knowing me, Josephine. I am much annoyed, and if I do not find you cheerful and contented I shall scold you right well."

Three days later he visited her again. She told him that she had spoken to Madame de Metternich and felt no doubt that Marie Louise would be given if asked for.* The following Sunday he announced:

"I have had all your affairs looked after here and ordered that everything be brought to the Elysée-Napoleon."

Now was the time to thank him, and she did it wholeheartedly.

* See note 213.

"Your letter to hand," he replied. "I will gladly see you at the Elysée and shall be very glad to see you oftener, for you know how I love you."

Had she really attained her object? The rumours about Navarre were as active as ever. To make quite sure, she sent Eugène to him once more.

"I told Eugène," he informed her the next day, "that you would rather listen to the vulgar gossip of a great city than to what I told you. People should not be allowed to invent lies to make you miserable.

"I have had all your effects moved to the Elysée. You shall come to Paris at once. Be at ease and contented and have full confidence in me."

Within a week she was back again in her old haunts, prepared to make the most of her share in the Austrian marriage. Alas! she had reckoned without her Napoleon. Nobody came near her. Schwarzenberg, Paolina, Talleyrand, Cambacérès, Napoleon himself, were giving entertainments every night. The carriages passed her door but did not stop. "It is," an onlooker remarked, "as if the palace (the Elysée) was in quarantine with the yellow flag flying." She discovered that, whereas at Malmaison her tears had been potent weapons, here in Paris they were powerless to win the slightest interest or sympathy. The Emperor had given orders that she was to be left severely alone. When the marriage with Marie Louise was finally decided on the Court went to Rambouillet. Josephine, tired of playing patience, tired of discussing stale news, tired of reading, of embroidery, of music, tired even of weeping, wrote to Napoleon.

"I am sorry," came his answer, "to see that you are unhappy."

A fortnight later, on March 9, 1810, sick and weary, Josephine hauled down her flag and returned to Mal-

maison. She had barely arrived there when an order reached her to go to the Castle of Navarre.

"I trust," Napoleon wrote, "that you will be pleased with what I have done for Navarre. You must see from that how anxious I am to make myself agreeable to you. Get ready to take possession of Navarre. You will go there on March 25 to pass the month of April.

"Adieu, dear."

Was he mocking her? The Castle of Navarre was scarcely fit for human habitation. Not a window would shut. There was neither paper nor tapestry. All the wainscoting was rotten, draught and damp everywhere, and no heating apparatus. But she knew better now than to disobey him. She arrived at Navarre on April 2, the day of his triumphal entry with Marie Louise into Paris and of their religious marriage in the Louvre. Her heart was filled with gloom.

Navarre was more than any taste for martyrdom, however cultivated, could support. Within a fortnight of her arrival at this dismal house, sixty miles distant from Paris, Josephine's courage broke. She sent, by the hand of her son Eugène, a letter to Napoleon asking leave to go back for a few days to Malmaison and to proceed from there to a spa, and begged that in the meanwhile the place might be made habitable. Napoleon, who was living at Compiègne with his new Empress, sent a message by Eugène that he consented to these proposals. This apparently off-hand way of treating her confirmed what Josephine had heard—namely, that Marie Louise, already jealous of her, was trying to persuade the Emperor to banish her to Italy, beside her son. Anger and despair divided her mind and prompted her to address to her late husband the most extraordinary letter he ever received from her:

"NAVARRE,
"*April* 19, 1810.

"SIRE,

"I have received by my son the assurance that your Majesty consents to my return to Malmaison, and grants to me the advances asked for in order to make the château of Navarre habitable. This double favour, Sire, dispels to a great extent the uneasiness, nay, ever the fears, which your Majesty's long silence had inspired. I was afraid that I might be entirely banished from your memory; I see that I am not. I am therefore less wretched to-day, and even as happy as henceforward it will be possible for me to be.

"I shall go at the end of the month to Malmaison, since your Majesty sees no objection to it. But I ought to tell you, Sire, that I should not so soon have taken advantage of the latitude which your Majesty left me in this respect had the house of Navarre not required, for my health's sake and for that of my household, repairs which are urgent. My idea is to stay at Malmaison a very short time; I shall soon leave it in order to go to the waters. But while I am at Malmaison your Majesty may be sure that I shall live there as if I were a thousand leagues from Paris. I have made a great sacrifice, Sire, and every day I realize more its full extent. Yet that sacrifice will be, as it ought to be, a complete one on my part. Your Highness, amid your happiness, shall be troubled by no expression of my regret.

"I shall pray unceasingly for your Majesty's happiness, perhaps even I shall pray that I may see you again; but your Majesty may be assured that I shall always respect our new relationship. I shall respect it in silence, relying on the attachment that you had to me formerly. I shall call for no new proof; I shall trust to everything from your justice and your heart.

"I limit myself to asking from you one favour; it is that you will deign to find a way of sometimes convincing both myself and my *entourage* that I have still a small place in your memory and a great place in your esteem and friendship. By this means, whatever happens, my sorrows will be mitigated without, as it seems to me, compromising that which is of permanent importance to me—the happiness of your Majesty.

"JOSEPHINE."

This is Napoleon's reply:

"COMPIÈGNE,

"MY DEAR, "*April* 21, 1810.

"I have yours of April 18 [*sic*]. It is written in a bad style. I am always the same; people like me do not change. I don't know what Eugène has told you. I have not written to you because you have not written to me, and my sole desire is to fulfil your slightest inclination.

"I see with pleasure that you are going to Malmaison and that you are contented; as for me, I shall be so, likewise, on hearing news from you and in giving you my news. I say no more about it until you have compared this letter with yours, and after that I will leave you to judge which of us two is the better friend.

"Adieu, dear; keep well and be just, for your sake and mine.

"NAPOLEON."

Josephine replied:

"A thousand, thousand loving thanks for not having forgotten me. My son has just brought me your letter. With what impetuosity I read it, and yet I took a long time over it, for there was not a word which did not make me weep; but these tears were very pleasant ones. I have found my whole heart again—such as it will always be. There are affections which are life itself and which can only end with it.

"I was in despair to find my letter of the 19th had displeased you. I do not remember the exact expressions, but I know what torture I felt in writing it—the grief at having no news from you.

"I wrote you on my departure from Malmaison, and since then how often have I wished to write you! But I appreciated the causes of your silence and feared to be importunate with a letter. Yours has been the true balm for me. Be happy, be as much so as you deserve; it is my whole heart which speaks to you. You have also just given me my share of happiness, and a share which I value the most, for nothing can equal, in my estimation, a proof that you still remember me.

"Adieu, dear; I thank you as affectionately as I shall always love you.

"JOSEPHINE."

On the day on which he received this letter Napoleon wrote to Fouché:

"Compiègne,
"*April* 24, 1810."

"Is it true that engravings are being published with the title of 'Josephine Beauharnais, *née* La Pagerie'? If this is true, have the prints seized and let the engravers be punished."

The moment seemed to Josephine a good one to ask for favours for her two young cousins, Louis and Henry Tascher, sons of her uncle the Baron. These young men were about to marry; Napoleon's approval was necessary if suitable provision was to be made. Eugène, therefore, who had come with his wife to Paris for the Emperor's wedding, and who was in close touch with his mother, wrote to Napoleon about the Taschers and took occasion, at the same time, to formulate certain demands for money to be spent at Navarre which Josephine had asked him to present on her behalf. Napoleon replied:

*To Prince Eugène Napoleon, Viceroy of Italy.*

"Compiègne,
"*April* 26, 1810.

"I have your letter, dated midnight, April 25, containing one from the Empress. Herewith you will find my answer:

"See Cambacérès about [Louis] Tascher's marriage. I desire it may take place as speedily as possible. I will keep all my promises about it.*

"As for the other [Henry] Tascher, I take no interest in him. He has failed too completely in his duty to me to take any trouble about him. The little blackguard took off the French cockade at Madrid without giving me notice simply because he fell in love and completely forgot all the duty he owed me, especially before that occasion. Let him do what he likes and marry whom he chooses. I do not care a jot. I shall not concern myself with the matter at all. I do not mention

* See note 214.

the subject to the Empress, but you know my views and I shall never alter them. I believe the young man to be giddy-headed and bad-tempered. I send you the King of Spain's [Giuseppe] letter. I consent to whatever the Empress does, but I will not confer any mark of my regard on a person who has behaved ill to me.

"I am very glad indeed the Empress likes Navarre. I am giving orders to have £12,000, which I owe her for 1810, and £12,000 more for 1811 advanced to her. She will then only have the £80,000 from the Public Treasury to come in.*

"I should have no objection if she has not already spent the £4,000 I gave for carrying on the work at Malmaison to its being suspended and the money laid out at Navarre. This would very nearly make up the £40,000 the Empress asked for.*

"I very much approve of her plan of spending everything at Navarre. She is free to go and take the waters wherever she likes, and even to come back to Paris after the season for taking them is over. As I start for Antwerp to-morrow, I do not see so much objection to her going to the baths of Aix-la-Chapelle. The only one I could make would be against her returning to places where I had been with her. I would rather she went to other waters where she has been without me, such as those of Plombières, Vichy, Bourbonne, Aix-en-Provence, etc., but if the Aix-la-Chapelle waters are those which suit her best I will make no objection whatever. What I desire above all other things, is that she should make herself easy and not allow herself to be excited and disturbed by Paris gossip."

To Josephine herself Napoleon wrote:

"Compiègne,
"*April* 28, 1810.

"My Dear,

"I have just received two letters from you. I am writing to Eugène. . . . Trouble yourself about nothing. Do not listen to the gossip of Paris; it is idle and far from knowing the real state of things. My affection for you does not change, and I long to know that you are happy and contented."

* See note 215.

## CHAPTER XXVII

## NAPOLEON'S SON

JOSEPHINE returned to Malmaison about the middle of May, and the younger of Hortense's sons* was sent to stay with her. "Oui Oui," as she called the boy, cheered and amused her. On June 13 Napoleon came with the secrecy of a guilty lover, and they walked together through the exquisite gardens. The visit lasted two hours. It gave him as much pleasure as it gave her, for he was feeling a little weary of Marie Louise and her childish tantrums.

"Never doubt," he had written to Josephine a few days earlier, "the whole truth of my affection for you. It will last as long as I."

In spite of his precautions, Marie Louise discovered where he had been,† and treated him to an exhibition of Teutonic jealousy which astonished and even alarmed him, but which afforded Josephine exquisite pleasure. She wrote to Hortense:

"I had yesterday a very happy day, for the Emperor came to see me. . . . During the time he is here I seem to have the courage to withhold my tears, but as soon as he is gone they will burst forth and I am very unhappy. He was as good and agreeable as usual, and I only hope that he saw in my heart all the tenderness and devotion with which it is filled for him."

She departed for Aix-les-Bains on June 18 in a very cheerful mood, travelling as the "Countess of Arberg" in the company of two ladies-in-waiting. They made

* See note 216.

† See note 217.

their way by Lyons and Geneva and reached Aix towards the end of the month.

But when the excitements of the journey were over a reaction began. Life at Aix was dull, a monotonous round of bathing and eating and sleeping.* Moreover, such news as arrived was not cheering: Luigi had defied Napoleon, abdicated the throne of Holland, and gone to live in Austria, so that Hortense no longer wore a crown. On July 10 Eugène arrived at Aix, on his way to Milan. But glad as she was to see him, his mother heard with foreboding that he had just been nominated by Napoleon heir to the Grand Duchy of Frankfort. The meaning of this new honour was obvious enough; Eugène was being compensated in advance for the loss, soon, no doubt, to be announced, of his Viceroyalty of Italy. Josephine saw all her carefully wrought plans falling to pieces. Nor did the letter she received from Napoleon a few days after Eugène had left her remove any of her anxieties. He wrote:

"RAMBOUILLET,
"*July* 8,† 1810.

"MY DEAR,

"I have your letter of July 8. You will have seen Eugène, and his presence will have done you good. I learn with pleasure that the waters are beneficial to you. The King of Holland has just abdicated the throne, while leaving the regency, according to the Constitution, in the hands of the Queen. He has quitted Amsterdam and left the Grand Duke of Berg behind.

"I have reunited Holland to France, which has, however, the advantage of setting the Queen free, and that unhappy girl is coming to Paris with her son, the Grand Duke of Berg; that will make her perfectly happy.

"My health is good. I have come here to hunt for a few days. I shall see you this autumn with pleasure. Never doubt my friendship; I never change. Keep well, be cheerful, and believe in the truth of my attachment."

* See note 218. † See note 219.

There was an item of news to which the Emperor made no reference—the fire that had broken out at the house of the Austrian Ambassador in Paris during a ball given in honour of Marie Louise. Everybody saw an ill omen in this disaster; and ill omens were again Josephine's chief amusement. Night after night she sat in her "palace"—wherever she went her abode became "the palace"—busy with her old pastime of telling fortunes with cards and getting agitated about the disasters which the cards invariably foreshadowed. Napoleon wrote again towards the end of July, but he had nothing of much interest to tell her. The only break in the weary procession of days occurred when a boat in which she was crossing the Lac de Bourget was nearly swamped by a squall. Napoleon, hearing of this, wrote that he was pained to see what a risk had been run, adding: "For an inhabitant of the isles of the ocean to die in a lake would have been a fatality indeed."

Life at Aix grew so dull that, early in September, she went to Geneva. Here she received a letter which did convey news:

"There is no doubt," Napoleon wrote, under date September 14, 1810, "that the Empress has entered on the fourth month of her pregnancy; she is well and is much attached to me."

Hortense arrived from Paris a few days later with further particulars. The meeting between mother and daughter was not a joyous one. Their luck was out, and they felt stranded and forsaken. Hortense spoke bitterly of the change in the prospects of her boys; Josephine foresaw the speedy end of her son Eugène's career.* She decided to go to Milan to spend the winter with him, and wrote to Napoleon for his consent.

"Go and see your son this winter. Come back to the waters

* See note 220.

of Aix next year," he replied, "or, still better, wait for the spring at Navarre. I should advise you to go to Navarre at once if I did not fear you would get tired of it. In my view, the only suitable places for you this winter are either Milan or Navarre; after that I approve of whatever you may do, for I do not wish to vex you in anything. . . .

"Adieu, dear. The Empress is as I told you in my last letter. . . . Be content and do not get excited."

The evident wish to get rid of her robbed the visit to Milan of all its attractions. The old campaigner buckled on her harness once again, determined to fight for her own with such poor weapons as remained. By November 2 she was back in Malmaison, writing to him to ask more of those small favours which, though they exasperated him, made him think of her and so prevented him from taking steps harmful to her children. He replied on November 14, 1810:

"My Dear,

"I have received your letter. Hortense has spoken to me about it. I note with pleasure that you are contented. I hope that you are not very tired of Navarre. My health is very good. The Empress progresses satisfactorily. I will do the various things you ask about your household. Take care of your health and never doubt my affection for you."

The hint to go to Navarre at once could not be overlooked. Josephine arrived there on November 22; she found that during her absence the old castle had been put into a thoroughly habitable state. Nevertheless, she was a prey to melancholy. All that her restless and frivolous instincts desired, all that ambition demanded, was in Paris. There the supplanter was looking forward to motherhood and snatching already at the honours and emoluments which Eugène and Hortense had so long enjoyed; there the Buonapartes were still leaders of the social life which had once revolved round herself; there

was Napoleon, the master of them all, whom she and she alone had known how to control and bend to her purpose. In Navarre there were only her faded women, a handful of local folk—open-mouthed with delight at living so near the throne, and dowdy of mind and body—these and the old Bishop of Evreux, who certainly played *tric-trac* indefatigably, but was too much a stranger to the life of Courts to be bearable for more than a little while.

"Our daily occupations," says Madame Ducrest,* "were generally as follows:

"We attended every Sunday the Mass performed in the chapel of the palace by a chaplain-in-ordinary. . . . We sat down to breakfast at ten o'clock, and were expected to be in the salon before her Majesty, who was extremely punctual. Her Majesty instantly repaired to the dining-room. . . . The breakfast as well as the dinner only consisted of one course, with the exception of the dessert, which formed the second course; the soup, the fruit dishes, the roast meat, and the dainties were all served up at the same time. There were besides large sideboards covered with pastry, jellies, etc. A footman stood in attendance behind each chair; four stewards, a butler, and two upper servants handed round the different dishes on the table and every kind of wine. On rising from table the footman in attendance presented a blue goblet with a glass of lukewarm water to rinse the mouth. . . .

"The Empress had behind her at table two valets, a Basque, running footman, a chasseur, and a chief steward. The service was generally of plate; at dessert, however, it was of porcelain, painted with fruit and flowers. On days of ceremony a magnificent service of Sèvres porcelain made its appearance; it had been presented by the Emperor subsequent to his divorce; the golden plateau was a gift from the City of Paris on the day of the coronation. . . . Breakfast generally lasted three-quarters of an hour. Everyone then retired to the gallery, which was used as a salon. The Empress worked at tapestry, the ladies at various objects, and a chamberlain on duty read the novels,

* See note 221.

travels, and memoirs that made their appearance. . . . When the weather was favourable the company took a ride. . . . At two o'clock three or four carriages drove us to the beautiful forest of Evreux or to the neighbourhood of that town. . . . The equerry on duty rode in full uniform at the door on the right hand of the Empress, an officer of cuirassiers at the other door, and a picket of that corps followed the calash. Feeling annoyed at this etiquette, her Majesty took upon herself to suppress it; she allowed the equerry and officer to wait upon her in a frock coat, and directed that the escort should only attend her on days of ceremony."

Napoleon, however, did not approve of this innovation, and sent a sharp rebuke and an order that "everything should be done at a distance from the Tuileries as if she [Josephine] were still in that palace."

"The ride," continues Madame Ducrest, "was generally over at four o'clock, and we returned to our respective apartments until the hour of six, when we repaired to dinner, which lasted an hour. It was almost invariably attended by some visitors from Evreux, such as the prefect, the mayor, the commandant of the gendarmerie, the colonel of the regiment of cuirassiers which did garrison duty in that town for the purpose of providing an escort, and several ladies. . . .

"After dinner her Majesty named those with whom she wished to play at backgammon, piquet, or casino. It was not customary to play for money when strangers were of the party. . . . The younger members of the party generally withdrew to the adjoining salon, containing a pianoforte and a harp, and indulged in music and dancing. We sometimes were so boisterous and broke out into such immoderate fits of laughter that Madame D'Arberg wanted to send us word that we should restrain our noisy mirth, but Josephine would not allow it, and assured her that our unrestrained joy had the effect of cheering her spirits and amusing her. At eleven o'clock we removed to a small salon, where a tea-table was laid. After this collation the visitors withdrew; the Empress remained another hour in conversation with us. . . . At midnight she withdrew to her apartment."

Napoleon kept a spy at Navarre, who reported everything to him. But what was there to report? Sometimes Josephine allowed the youngsters to dress up in her old clothes, sometimes the illness of a footman or a waiting-woman caused a little whiff of excitement, sometimes quarrels and jealousies divided the little coterie. Josephine made the best of it, as Napoleon, a little later, was to make the best of circumstances dissimilar only in their greater wretchedness.

On New Year's Day, 1811, Josephine announced to her Court that, instead of giving the usual presents, she would have a lottery of jewels. She appeared among her women laden with necklaces and rings, and distributed these according to the dictates of a spinning-wheel, whose movements, however, were kept well under control. The distribution occasioned the usual jealousies, and appears to have annoyed considerably Madame Gazani, once Napoleon's mistress but now attached as reader to the Empress. Josephine, to her credit, treated the woman very well.

The birth of Napoleon's son on March 20, 1811, was soon known at Navarre. Eugène came hurrying after the courier who brought the news, and entertained his mother and her women with descriptions of the behaviour of the Buonapartes during the period of Marie Louise's confinement. Paolina and Carlotta, said Eugène, had tried to cover the annoyance they felt at the birth of an heir by exaggerated expressions of pity for the Empress. At eleven o'clock at night, just when Josephine and her Court were about to take tea, the folding doors of the gallery were suddenly thrown open by the doorkeeper, who announced in a loud voice and according to the prescribed formula: "A message from the Emperor." A young page named de Saint-Hilaire, who looked very tired, entered the room and immediately

began to fumble in his pockets for the letter of which he was the bearer. He could not find the letter and became painfully embarrassed, but Josephine talked to him as if he was one of her guests and as if no letter from the Emperor was in question, and at last the letter was forthcoming.

Josephine retired with Eugène to read the news, and when she came back it was observed that her eyes were red. Eugène, too, who had inherited his mother's gift, was weeping. Napoleon's letter was produced and read, and Madame Ducrest, who saw it, says it was covered with blots.* The page, de Saint-Hilaire, who carried a reply back to Paris, received a diamond pin worth £200. Two days later another letter arrived from Napoleon.

"PARIS,
"*March* 22, 1811.

"MY DEAR,

"I have your letter. I thank you for it.

"My son is fat and in excellent health. I trust he may continue to improve. He has my chest, my mouth, and my eyes. I hope he may fulfil his destiny. I am always pleased with Eugène; he has never given me the least anxiety.

"NAPOLEON."

Josephine immediately ordered a fête in honour of the "King of Rome," as Napoleon called his infant. To this fête she summoned her cousin, Henry Tascher, he of whom Napoleon had so poor an opinion, and Henry Tascher's sister, the Princess of Aremberg. The ladies of Evreux came flocking to the house, many of them dressed with all the bad taste peculiar to the province. As soon as the company had assembled, the doors communicating with Josephine's apartment were thrown open and she entered the ballroom resplendent with diamonds. She wore a silver llama dress with a

* See note 222.

magnificent diadem, and was attended by all the officers and women of her household. She made the round of the ballroom, addressing some remarks to each guest.

One of the dancers at the ball, the very fat M. de Clermont-Tonnerre, ventured on a caper and crashed through the floor, which had been built for the occasion. It was necessary to send for a carpenter to get him out. With the exception of this mishap the ball was a great success. Supper was served at two o'clock in the morning on three long tables, and to that presided over by Josephine the principal women of the town were invited. The men supped after the women, and it was four o'clock in the morning before the guests went home. They, no doubt, were transported with happiness, but what were Josephine's thoughts?

Poor Josephine, she was growing fat.* It had been observed during her visit to Aix that, for the first time in her life, she had worn whalebone in her corsets. Even this precaution, however, had not availed her. The exquisite figure which for so long had charmed France and excited the envy of all women was a thing of the past. There were anxious consultations with Dr. Horan, her personal medical attendant, but that excellent man could do nothing.

* See note 223.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

## THREE QUEENS

Josephine growing fat at Navarre, in the company of the "ladies" of Evreux, is a figure of pathos. But there was in this woman's nature a stubborn element which, to some extent, offset her misfortunes. She wept, indeed, but her tears were never those of despair. After all, things had often been worse.

Her chief trouble was her debts. Even in the depths of the country these were steadily accumulating, for, though the courtiers of Paris had forgotten the ex-Empress, the tradesmen of Paris, the milliners and jewellers had not. Young men kept arriving at the castle with seductive boxes and cases well filled with the latest modes. They took nothing back with them. Even an income of £120,000 a year could not bear so great a strain indefinitely, especially as Josephine's unbusiness-like habits allowed all her tradespeople to rob her.

The crash was approaching when, in August, 1811, the Court of Navarre was transported back to Malmaison. The additional expenses incurred by living so near the capital accelerated its coming. Napoleon's vigilant eye perceived the danger:

"Put some order into your affairs," he wrote sharply on August 25, 1811. "Spend only £60,000 [a year] and save as much every year. This will make a reserve of £600,000 in ten years for your grandchildren. It is pleasant to be able to give them something and be helpful to them. Instead of that I hear you have debts, which would be really too bad. Look after your affairs and don't give to everyone who wants to help himself. If you wish to please me, let me hear that you have

accumulated a large fortune. Consider how ill I must think of you if I know that you, with £120,000 a year, are in debt."

The receipt of this letter sent Josephine to bed in tears. The idea of saving money for her grandchildren had not occurred to her and did not attract her. She had looked to Napoleon to make that provision. Could she doubt that this inhospitable counsel proceeded from Marie Louise, the thrifty *hausfrau* of the Tuileries? That woman, no doubt, wanted everything for her own son. She quickly became hysterical, and succeeded as usual in frightening her Court. Hortense was sent for, and reported her mother's "illness" to Napoleon, who by this time had relented. He made haste, whether from force of habit or from real regret, to write a second time.

"I send to know how you are, for Hortense tells me you were in bed yesterday. I was annoyed with you about your debts. I do not wish you to have any; on the contrary, I wish you to put £40,000 aside every year to give to your grandchildren when they get married. Nevertheless, never doubt my affection for you and don't worry any more about the present embarrassment.

"Adieu, dear; send me word that you are well. They say that you are as fat as a good Normandy farmeress."

Napoleon's tact was never his strong point, but Josephine was in no position to take offence. She was prepared to endure anything so long as he beat off the greedy horde of creditors who made life a misery. As a further insurance she begged him to grant her a glimpse of the King of Rome, and a secret meeting at Bagatelle in the Bois de Boulogne was arranged. She took the child in her arms, and, in broken tones, exclaimed: "Ah, dear child! Some day, perhaps, you may know how much I have paid for your existence."

It was difficult for Napoleon after this to make any further reference to his plan whereby she was to pay also for her grandchildren. She continued to live at Malmaison, and got into touch once more with many old friends. The Emperor was no longer able to tell her whom she might and whom she might not receive, and her little Court earned a reputation for gaiety and good manners. The Court of Marie Louise, on the contrary, was characterized by a dulness which its respectable character did nothing to alleviate. Napoleon had the whole business so well in hand that in addition to being master, he was master of ceremonies. One of his new occupations consisted in aborting flirtations between wives whose husbands were absent and officers whose posts kept them in Paris. He sent numbers of these young men to regret their gallantries at the seats of war, while the women were instructed by him to remain at home.* Nobody felt quite safe or even quite comfortable. How well Josephine could imagine it all! Her sides ached and her tears flowed at the spectacle of Napoleon indulging his most commendable instincts at the expense of his courtiers and with the help of his virtuous wife.

Malmaison soon became a haven in this tempest of propriety. Everything there was gracious and cordial. "People flocked to her," says Hortense, "though she lived far out of town and had no more favours to bestow." All were made welcome, and the ex-Empress had the satisfaction of seeing her circle, the same genial circle of the Directory days, being reformed under the very nose of Napoleon and at the very hour when that stern apothecary was forcing his purge of virtue down so many throats.

Politics, the discussion of which was forbidden at

* See note 224.

the Tuileries,* were freely talked about at Malmaison. Josephine consequently heard all about the quarrel which was developing between Napoleon and the Emperor Alexander of Russia, and was aware, early in 1812, that the Russian campaign had been decided on. She watched the preparations for war with shrewd eyes, but the affair was none of her business. She made her preparations for a visit to Milan to attend the confinement of her daughter-in-law, Eugène's wife, and left Malmaison two months after the Emperor and Marie Louise had departed together for Dresden and the front.

She journeyed in the first place to Geneva, where she had bought a villa; and there, in execrable weather, crossed the Alps by the Mount Cenis route. As she approached Milan, where her son had reigned so long as Viceroy, memories must have crowded upon her, and no doubt she entertained her ladies with tales of the day, sixteen years ago, when she had come to the city as the bride of General Bonaparte. That season of her life, like the period when she was Alexander de Beauharnais' bride, had improved with the passage of time. We may suppose, therefore, that her genial memory yielded up unsuspected treasures of incident and emotion. Ah, how she had adored her husband in those moments of pure happiness!

Eugène had gone to the wars with the Emperor, but, for all that, Milan gave Josephine an impressive welcome. Three days later the Vicereine was happily delivered of a girl, and the infant's grandmother found herself surrounded with courtiers, who dwelt ecstatically on the sacrifice which she had made for the sake of France and of Europe. Towards the end of August she recrossed the Alps and returned to Aix-les-Bains.

* See note 225.

Two middle-aged women whose lives had been bound up with her own during many years awaited her at the Spa.* The sisters Clery, daughters of the Marseilles silk merchant, possessed widely different natures. Julie, the elder, was gentle and amiable; Désirée, the younger, seldom said a good word of anybody. Désirée's cross was the fact that, seventeen years before, she had refused an offer of marriage from Napoleone Buonaparte; Julie, on the contrary, had married Giuseppe Buonaparte and, in consequence, had become Queen of Naples and then Queen of Spain. Both sisters, at the moment when Josephine arrived at Aix, were living in anxiety, for King Joseph had just been forced by Wellington to flee from Madrid, while Bernadotte, Désirée's husband, whom Napoleon had recently made Crown Prince of Sweden, had already abandoned the cause of France and was helping Alexander of Russia. Julie, though she did not know it, was about to lose her crown. Désirée's crown, which her descendants and those of Josephine† wear to this day, had not yet come to her.

The three Queens, she who had worn a crown and lost it, she who still wore her crown, and she whose crown belonged to the future, took their baths and douches together for a month. They contrived to be very kind to one another, for the days of their jealousy were ended. Josephine, released at last from the necessity of an irksome discretion, opened her heart and seems to have been unusually good company.

The news from the front came dribbling in. Napoleon, the ladies learned, was driving the Russians before him as he was accustomed to drive his enemies. Josephine expressed the view, based on letters she had received from Eugène, that the campaign would soon be over, and no doubt her companions agreed with her. Neither of them

* See note 226. † See note 227.

cared very much, for neither of them had much cause to wish to be restored to her husband. In Julie's case the trouble was merely gallantry, but Désirée had quarrelled with Bernadotte and had refused to join him in Stockholm so long as it might be possible to remain in Paris. The Queens parted at the end of August, and Josephine returned to her villa at Prégny on the Lake of Geneva. Here she shocked* her neighbours in various ways, but most of all by the innuendoes which with great good humour she uttered against Napoleon. It is an amiable characteristic of some women to believe that their lovers must necessarily be endowed with a supernatural capacity for love. The same sentiment, in our own country, frequently endows the characters of popular statesmen with secret and wholly deplorable traits.

Josephine returned to Malmaison at the end of October, just when Napoleon found himself compelled to retreat from Moscow by the same corpse-strewn road as that on which he had advanced to the city. She was in plenty of time to read the bulletins which told of her son's distinguished service, but even news so cheering as this could not divert her mind from the greater news of the ruin of the Grand Army.

"Our distress, our grief," says Hortense,† "was as overwhelming as the disaster that had caused it. Everything was swathed in mourning."

The eagle's wings were clipped. That noble bird, unable any longer to soar, began to use beak and talons in unequal combat with fate. Paris gazed, speechless, at the unwonted spectacle; Malmaison shuddered.

"What," said Josephine, "will become of us if he is beaten?"

* See note 228.

† See note 229.

Out came the packs of cards. It was observed that the figures composing the number of the new year 1813, when added together, made thirteen, and that this year began on a Friday.

## CHAPTER XXIX

## "NAPOLEON OR I"

So far as Josephine was concerned the year began well enough. Napoleon paid her several visits, and she renewed her acquaintance with the King of Rome. Was the Emperor trying to cheat fortune by re-establishing, in secret, a relationship which had always been lucky? Paris thought so and whispered the news.

In April Napoleon went to Germany to take command of his new army. Confidence in him was less than in former times, but it was believed, notwithstanding, that he would soon retrieve his losses. The victories of Lautzen, Bautzen, and Dresden confirmed this faith. Consequently, the heavy defeat of Leipzig in October, followed by the typhus epidemic at army headquarters at Mayence in November, produced a panic. Josephine, sure now that his separation from herself had ruined her late husband, began to experience the liveliest anxiety. Who was going to provide for her? Her restless gaze looked beyond the frontiers of France to the allied kings who were preparing to invade her country.

She was not alone in this agitated prospecting. With but few exceptions all those who had profited by Napoleon's power were thinking about ways of retaining their profit should the Emperor come to grief. The Royalists found themselves popular once more, and were even inconvenienced by the strain which the recital of good works done in secret on behalf of the exiled Bourbons by so many members of the new aristocracy laid on their memories.

No longer was Josephine's divorce from Napoleon the heavy affliction it had seemed; it was, on the contrary, the charter of hope. Whom Bonaparte had forsaken the allies might be expected to cherish. The discarded woman at Malmaison hugged the thought of her marriage to Alexander de Beauharnais. She gave thanks that, under the goodness of Providence, she had been able to help so many of her fellow-aristocrats in the days of their humiliation. But these pious reflections were never incompatible with the tender affection which she continued to express towards Napoleon.

She wrote to her son, whom the Emperor in his extremity had summoned from Italy:

"Do not lose an instant, my dear Eugène, whatever may be the obstacles, to comply with the Emperor's orders. He has written to me on this subject. . . . France above all! France has need of all her children. Come, then, my dear son, hasten; never could your zeal so well serve the Emperor as now. Every moment is precious. . . .

"Adieu, my dear Eugène, I have only time to embrace you and to repeat: Come as quickly as possible."

Eugène sent his excuses. A month later the wounded eagle glared from Fontainebleau at the royal vultures swooping on his nest.

"Napoleon or I," murmured the Emperor Alexander of Russia softly as he rode into Paris. "I or Napoleon. The world is not big enough to hold us both."*

* See note 230.

# BOOK IV
# ALEXANDER

## CHAPTER XXX

## GOOD NEWS

Josephine relied on Hortense for news of what was happening. Her daughter spent the last few evenings before the fall of Paris with the Empress Marie Louise and the King of Rome. She states that she opposed the decision of Giuseppe and Luigi to remove the Empress and her child from Paris, and there is no difficulty in believing that she remarked to the agitated daughter of Francis of Austria:

"At least, sister, remember that you lose your crown."

"Perhaps you are right," Marie Louise replied, "but thus it has been decided, and if the Emperor reproaches anyone it will not be me."*

The Emperor's reproaches were of no consequence. Hortense descended to the courtyard of the palace and sent off a mounted messenger to her mother at Malmaison, advising her to retire to Navarre. Marie Louise drove off with her son "in broad daylight, without troops, without orders, without a head able to guide them, and without a thought for the crushing depression that would result in the capital." It was all over. Mama Letizia drove off—amid hootings; Giuseppe, Luigi, and Jeromini drove off. Out came the shopkeepers and tore down the bees and other emblems of Napoleon's power from their doors. On April 1 Josephine, at Navarre, clasped her daughter once more in her arms.

She had had an exciting journey from Malmaison.† The fear of the Cossacks was in every heart. Her carriage

* See note 231.

† See note 232.

had broken down shortly after the journey began, and at that moment she had seen a troop of horsemen approaching. It occurred to her that the enemy had sent these men to take her prisoner. She jumped out into the roadway and fled across the fields with a footman, who had recognized French uniforms, in pursuit. He found her "a prey to the deepest despair and her mind almost bewildered."

She quickly recovered her cheerfulness when Hortense arrived with the news of the scamper of the Buonapartes out of Paris. News of the Emperor himself soon arrived. It came, rather unseasonably, at midnight, but Josephine's tears were as readily available at that hour as at any other. She rushed to her daughter's room and threw herself on her bed, crying:*

"Poor, poor Napoleon! He is sent to the Island of Elba! How wretched he will be!"

The pious reflection followed: "Were it not for his wife, I would go and shut myself up with him."

This was Josephine's cry now, and she was tireless in repeating it. Napoleon had no stouter champion.

"Let them accuse him of loving glory overmuch, of being too ambitious; but let them cease from slandering him . . . " she cried when she read the unkind articles with which the newspapers of Paris were regaling their readers.

These admirable sentiments found their way to Paris. Scarcely had the conquerors of Napoleon entered into that city when Alexander of Russia granted his aide-de-camp, Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg,† leave to send his respects to the ex-Empress of the French and her daughter. A fortnight after their arrival at Navarre both Josephine and Hortense received from this old friend, with whom they had had many dealings at the time

* See note 233. † See note 234.

of the Austrian conspiracy, letters couched in almost identical terms.

"Madame," wrote Prince Leopold to Hortense under date Paris, April 14, 1814, "I am pleased again to be able to communicate with your Majesty, and at the same time to convey news that may not prove altogether disagreeable. Since my arrival here I have been anxious about your Majesty's fate, in view of the painful situation in which she finds herself. I resolved to speak frankly to my Emperor and Lord [Alexander], and I hasten to repeat to your Majesty the result of the conversation which took place to-day. . . . The kindest of Emperors, if I may call him so, said that for a long time he had desired to make the acquaintance of those princesses whose worth was only equalled by their charm, and that he was deeply interested in the fate of that estimable family which had behaved so nobly in such trying circumstances. He highly praised the conduct of the Viceroy [Eugène], who alone has shown nobility and dignity in his conduct. It would take too long to repeat in full all the favourable and true remarks the Emperor made regarding your Majesties. He finally asked me to convey to your Majesty as well as to her august Mother his desire to make their acquaintance. He would have gone to Navarre had that place not been so remote, but he suggests that they meet him at Malmaison, as being nearer Paris and more agreeable. He hopes to see your Majesty there and also her children. At the same time he conveyed to me the most reassuring news about the business affairs of your Majesty's family. . . ."

So the Austrian conspiracy had justified itself after all. Josephine packed up and was off back to Malmaison as fast as her horses could gallop. She urged Hortense to accompany her, but Luigi's wife relates that she felt bound in honour to rejoin Marie Louise at Rambouillet.

"My place," she told her mother with commendable spirit, "is where the misfortune is the greatest, and, as I suppose that the Empress Marie Louise must be overcome

with grief, I cannot hesitate in going to offer her my consolations."*

Vain sacrifice! Marie Louise had committed herself already to the hands of her father. Hortense, on learning the truth, left her immediately.

"I reached Malmaison at one o'clock in the afternoon, April 16," she recounts. "I was surprised to find the courtyard full of Cossacks, and I inquired why they were there. I was told it was because my mother was walking in the garden with the Emperor of Russia."

Napoleon was still at Fontainebleau.

* See note 235.

## CHAPTER XXXI

## "OUR ANGEL"

Josephine read her Alexander at a glance; here was her first husband risen from the grave with a crown on his head. She plumbed the shallows of his poetic mysticism and the abysmal deeps of his vanity while they strolled together in the comfortable ways hallowed by Hippolyte Charles and Napoleon. Alexander Romanoff, like Alexander de Beauharnais, had the itch of edification in his bones. She perceived that his exalted spirit was wounded by the indifference of allies who failed to recognize in him the saviour of Europe and the sole conqueror of Napoleon. This was the reason why he had sought out Napoleon's wife.

She spoke to him only of the greatness of the fallen Emperor, saying that he alone was able to comprehend that greatness, since he alone had known how to oppose it. When he went away Hortense called him "Our Angel."

She did not write herself to Napoleon, but she had already urged Hortense to write, and was well pleased when the following reply reached her daughter from Fontainebleau:

"Fontainebleau,
"*April* 17, 1814.

"My Sister,

"I received a letter from you dated April 9. I have received a second from Rambouillet, the 16th. I thank you for the visit you paid the Empress and for the sentiments you express for me. Let me know what becomes of you and have

news of you from time to time, and believe in my constant regard for you.

"Your affectionate brother,

"NAPOLEON.

"P.S.—Please give many messages from me to the Empress Josephine."

"Our Angel," on his next visit, was permitted, doubtless, to read this testimonial. He had already constituted himself Josephine's protector and friend. He now gave her his personal guarantee of the receipt of £40,000 a year which had been provided for her in the treaty made with Napoleon by the allies, and he guaranteed also the receipt by Hortense of £16,000 a year granted to her and her children in the same document. This was better than nothing, though much less than Napoleon had allowed. But Alexander's goodness seemed to expand as the days passed. He sent all his friends to Malmaison: the Crown Prince of Sweden, the King of Prussia, his sons, and the Princes of the Confederated German States.

Napoleon left for Elba, and the corpse was out of the house of mourning. Everybody at Malmaison could afford to look more cheerful. Alexander came again and renewed his respectful salutations.

"He spent much of his time with me," says Hortense, "playing with my children and taking them on his knees. I felt a moment's emotion when I thought: 'An enemy is their only protector.'"

That feeling soon passed. Alexander's charm was discovered by Josephine to reside in his "hunger for affection." She set about turning it to good account.

"Are we going to let him leave," she asked Hortense, "before anything is settled?"

With all her old skill and with most stubborn courage she addressed herself to the achievement of her purpose.

The glory of Napoleon was gathered up and presented, on bended knee, to the Russian. He and he alone was pronounced worthy to deck himself with the eagle's plumage.

Injured vanity had brought Alexander to Malmaison; soothed vanity kept him there. So shrewdly did Josephine play her hand that a moment actually came when her visitor told her that he had thought of placing Eugène on the throne of France. The poor mother's heart overflowed.

England and Austria—and Talleyrand, however, had other ideas. "The Bourbons or Napoleon," said Talleyrand crisply. "Anything else is an intrigue."* So the Bourbons returned, and Alexander found himself faced by allies whose chief concern was to belittle his performance. Even the wretched Bourbons gave themselves airs. When Louis XVIII. came waddling down from Boulogne, fresh from his retreat at Hammersmith, Alexander learned that he regarded the year 1814 as the nineteenth of his reign. There had apparently been no Napoleon.† Alexander, choking with fury, rushed to Hortense's house in Paris. He poured out the dismal tale.

"You and I," said Josephine's daughter, "know better."

"He afterwards spoke," she recounts, "about the Emperor Napoleon; told me how he had loved him and how deeply he had been wounded when he found out that he had been deceived in him."

Josephine considered the moment favourable to send for Eugène, and that young man came to Paris. Thanks to Alexander's insistence, he was received by Louis XVIII., who spoke to him of the good his mother had done in France. The Duke of Orleans‡ recalled his

* See note 236. † See note 237. ‡ See note 238.

friendship with Alexander de Beauharnais. This was all very well, but Josephine remained uneasy. Deeds, not words, were her concern.

"My mother's sole wish," Hortense declares, "was to see her son suitably established, but the only person who supported her was the Emperor of Russia. . . . Whenever the Emperor of Russia came to see me in Paris or at Malmaison it was difficult to avoid bringing up the subject of business."

This difficulty was gradually surmounted by Alexander's promise to compel King Louis to create Hortense Duchess of St. Lue. Mother and daughter conducted the "Angel" to St. Lue, and entertained him there on the very day on which all the other sovereigns were attending a solemn Mass in Notre-Dame for the repose of the souls of King Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette.

"I have injured you," he said to Josephine; "I have benefited others, but it is only with you that I find affection. In short, I ought to be at Paris to-day with the other kings, and here I am at St. Lue."

They spoke of the strangeness of human life and then sat down to luncheon. After luncheon Josephine walked with her guest in the forest, but as evening fell she retired discreetly to the castle, leaving her daughter and Alexander alone. The Russian's heart was overflowing. He opened to the woman at his side all the secret places of his spirit, and even admonished her gently on her lack of faith.

"You do not trust enough," he said, "to the loving-kindness of God."

He related some of the sorrows that had saddened his life—omitting, no doubt, his share in the murder of his father, Paul I.—assured her that he had always found prayer a true consolation, and declared that he placed his hopes in Heaven.

The party, greatly edified and reassured by these and other stimulating reflections, returned to Paris. Josephine felt that the fulness of time had arrived.

After dinner she had an interview with Alexander, which "seemed to relieve her mind."

## CHAPTER XXXII

## THE END

JOSEPHINE had achieved her purpose. At the moment when Mama Letizia and her brood were fleeing helter-skelter across Europe a stream of royal visitors—Napoleon's conquerors—came pouring out to Malmaison, among them the Grand Dukes Constantine, Nicholas, and Michael of Russia, King Frederick William of Prussia, and the Crown Prince of Prussia. The King of Prussia and his sons dined with her on May 23, 1814; that same evening Hortense received the gallant Alexander in Paris. The Beauharnais had never kept better company.

Scarcely had Alexander gone away when Hortense heard a loud knocking at her door. It was Eugène, who had come to say that their mother had been taken ill. She ordered her carriage. When she reached Malmaison Josephine could scarcely speak.

But her illness was not able as yet to deflect that dauntless spirit from the promises which she had obtained from Alexander. He was coming in two days to dine at Malmaison, and she lay, in spite of her laboured breathing, busy with preparations for his reception. Nothing, she was determined, should be left to chance. The day of the dinner arrived and, livid and panting for breath, she had herself dressed in pink satin, with ribbons of the same colour,* in case her benefactor should come to visit her in her bedroom. This was not permitted. Alexander spent the afternoon and evening

* See note 239.

with Eugène, and Hortense, with mistaken kindness, told her mother that the guest had postponed his arrival.

"I am sure," lamented Josephine, "that the reason he did not come was because he felt embarrassed at having nothing new to report about your brother's affairs."

She was reassured on this point and became calm. Late at night Alexander, who had summoned his own doctor, left Malmaison, and the various members of the household went to bed. Nobody was called during the night, but the morning revealed a terrible change in the features of the patient. She remained conscious, but she was unable to utter a word. The fact that she was suffering from diphtheria was recognized.* The doctors could hold out no hope, and the Last Sacraments were administered. Eugène took his mother in his arms. About midday, in his arms and arrayed still in her silks and ribbons, Josephine died.

The news saddened France and, indeed, the whole world, and agreement was general among Napoleon's enemies that an exemplary life had ended in a manner charged with instruction for all. The Emperor of Russia, the Emperor of Austria, the King of Prussia, and the King of France, as well as the English representatives in Paris, sent their condolences. A few days later Louis XVIII.'s police bulletin informed him:

"The death of Madame de Beauharnais excites widespread sympathy. This woman was unfailingly gentle and possessed much charm and attractiveness in manner and in mind. Extremely unhappy during her husband's reign, she sought refuge from his roughness and neglect in the study of botany."

Josephine's grave† is in the little church of Rueil. When Napoleon, newly returned from Elba,

* See note 240.

† See note 241.

visited Malmaison with Hortense a year later he broke down.

"Excellent Josephine!" he exclaimed. "She, at any rate, would never have abandoned me."

That may be doubted.

# NOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

# NOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY*

Note 1. Josephine's birthday has been disputed, largely owing to her own fault in announcing herself as the youngeſt daughter of her parents. Her baptismal record exiſts. See Masson's *Joséphine de Beauharnais* on this point and *Josephine Empress of the French,* by Frederick A. Ober (Unwin, 1901). Ober's work is valuable because he made personal researches in Martinique, where he consulted the letters in the Tascher family archives (*Archives de la Maison de Tascher*), which were freely placed at his disposal. He reproduces a number of these letters, which are of great intereſt. For the reſt his work is of a highly laudatory character, his view of Josephine admitting of no fault.

Note 2. Frédérick Masson, in his *Joséphine de Beauharnais* and *Napoléon et les femmes,* has collected a great deal of information about this remarkable woman, and she is mentioned in many of the memoirs of the period. There can be no doubt that the belief was current in some quarters that she was Alexander de Beauharnais' mother.

Note 3. Notes on the hiſtory of the Beauharnais family and also of the Tascher family of great intereſt are given in the text (vol. i.) and at the end of the firſt volumes of the *Memoirs of Queen Hortense,* edited by the late Prince Napoleon (Thornton Butterworth, 2 vols., 1928).

Note 4. Madame de Rémusat in her *Mémoires* claims to have seen some letters of Alexander de Beauharnais to Josephine that expreſſed moſt tender sentiments. Her teſtimony, always intereſting, is also always a little doubtful, because in addition to having been Talleyrand's miſtress she was a devoted Royaliſt. Moreover, her original manuscript was deſtroyed by fire during the Hundred Days. Her memoirs were rewritten in 1818. It is nevertheless quite possible that Alexander did write tender letters to his wife, for he was a man of many and rapidly changing moods.

Note 5. The Duchesse d'Abrantès in her *Mémoires* (vol. ii., p. 383) says: "Although the Beauharnais were of gentle birth they

* Where English translations exiſt references are to them.

had no right to drive in the royal equipages, and Josephine—Madame de Beauharnais—was *never* presented at Court. Her husband was only invited to the Court balls because he was a good dancer." The same statement is made by Constant in his *Mémoires*. The names do not appear in the official lists.

Note 6. Alexander's infidelities have been insisted on by most of Josephine's defenders, notably Ober. Richardson, in his careful *Dictionary of Napoleon,* mentions them without comment.

Note 7. Masson gives details about this period of Josephine's life, and Ober supplies some highly coloured and romantic episodes. William is said to have written to Josephine on many occasions during the Empire and to have come to Malmaison in 1814, when she lay dying. He died shortly afterwards. Queen Hortense has sometimes been quoted as a contributor to the few facts about this man which are known. (Ober.)

Note 8. Ober quotes the substance of a letter from Joseph Tascher La Pagerie to his son-in-law (p. 97): "He closed with the bitter taunt that the only war Alexander had made in this boastful campaign of his was against the reputation of a defenceless woman and the peace of her family." Richardson states that he wrote an abusive letter to his wife in which he disowned the paternity of Hortense.

Note 9. See Ober (p. 100) for some details of this period. He quotes letters in the Tascher archives to the effect that Josephine's father would not allow of his daughter receiving "alms" from her husband and sent her money. Not much, though.

Note 10. By a curious chance Hortense rented the house twenty-six years later, after Napoleon's banishment to Elba (see her *Memoirs*).

Note 11. Hortense is untrustworthy where her mother's faults are concerned and her memory is not exact. But she gives valuable details about events—*e.g.,* the departure from Martinique—which are to be obtained nowhere else (*Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 32). Masson, in the *Revue de Paris,* adduced evidence that Josephine went to Martinique to give birth to a third child. "This daughter," says Turquon, "Josephine, in 1805, married to an officer." This story lacks any substantial proof.

Note 12. Hortense makes this statement. It is probable that, at Fontainebleau, some such expression was used, but Paris certainly

did not entertain the idea that Alexander de Beauharnais was a likely successor to Louis XVI. In all she writes Hortense stresses the importance of her family and goes out of her way to suggest its united character. *Qui s'excuse s'accuse.*

Note 13. It was on Robespierre's motion in the Constituent Assembly that no members of this body were permitted to sit in the Legislative Assembly. The rule worked badly, because it excluded from Parliament all men of experience in public affairs.

Note 14. The Emperor, Marie Antoinette's brother, had, it is true, ordered the disbanding of the *émigrés* in Flanders, but this order was not taken seriously in Paris. The Royal Family, on the other hand, considered that the Emperor was lacking both in wisdom and in affection because he showed so little eagerness to help them.

Note 15. *Memoirs of Count Lavalette,* p. 71. Lavalette himself married a Beauharnais, Alexander's niece, and always says the very utmost in favour of this family.

Note 16. On March 1, 1792, the Emperor Leopold, Marie Antoinette's brother, died, and was succeeded by his son, afterwards the Emperor Francis I.

Note 17. The non-juring priests were those who had refused to take the civic oath. They were regarded by good Catholics, including the King, as the only true priests in France. The juring priests were looked upon, on the contrary, as mere political pawns who had abjured their faith.

Note 18. It is assumed by many writers that the insurrection of June 20, 1792, was organized, like that of August 10, by the Jacobins. But this is not the case. Brissot was the active agent of the disturbance in June.

Note 19. Early in the day of August 10 many of the Liberals discreetly left the Assembly and went home. When the King took refuge with his Parliament the majority of the members remaining in the House were Jacobins.

Note 20. Danton's share in the events of August 10 has never been satisfactorily cleared up. He was the chief author of the movement which expressed itself in the attack, but it is by no means certain that he took any active part himself. Danton, on this occasion, was doubtless waiting to see which way the cat would jump.

Note 21. Napoleon was promoted Captain as from February,

1792, though he was not in possession of the rank until July, the reason being that his promotion was not conferred until the charge hanging over him had been disposed of.

Note 22. "He"—*i.e.*, Bourrienne, who later became his secretary.

Note 23. The 13th Vendémiaire, when Bonaparte successfully defended the Convention against a Royalist mob, administering the "whiff of grape shot."

Note 24. Hortense states: "One morning a few months later my mother sent for me. It was the 10th of August (1792). The mob was attacking the Tuileries and Paris was in an uproar. On such a dreadful day my mother wished to be with her children." It is in the highest degree improbable that the children were brought into Paris on the 10th, when, from the earliest hour, the streets were full of bands of ruffians. The fact that the children were in Paris on the 10th shows that Josephine had warning, probably from Tallien, who was in the councils of the Jacobins, of what was coming.

Note 25. For details of the September massacres, see *The September Massacres,* by Lenotre, a full and documented account of the whole of this event.

Note 26. Las Cases, *Memorial of St. Helena.* Las Cases reproduces two separate accounts by Napoleon of these events, which accounts, he says, were dictated from memory and without reference to books or papers.

Note 27. Las Cases, *Memorial of St. Helena.*

Note 28. This great square was known during the monarchy as the Place Louis XV., then later as the Place de la Nation, and now as the Place de la Concorde.

Note 29. The victories of Dumouriez alarmed England because they placed the port of Antwerp in French hands. The King's death alarmed the aristocracies of Europe.

Note 30. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 34. "In the midst of the tragic scenes that succeeded one another in Paris it was difficult for parents to attend to their children's education, and my mother's companion, Mademoiselle de Lannoy, acted as my governess."

Note 31. Danton withdrew from the executive at an early period in the life of the Convention, preferring to work as a private member. He sat far up on the Mountain.

Note 32. The Committee of General Security must be dis-

tinguished from the Committee of Public Safety. The former was charged with the government of the nation, the latter with judicial and other functions. Robespierre's policy tended to weaken the Committee of Public Safety by transferring some of its powers to the Committee of General Security, and this proceeding helped to bring about his downfall.

Note 33. Danton did not offer himself for re-election, but this was a step dictated by the probability that he would not, in any case, be chosen. His failure was manifest.

Note 34. Alexander de Beauharnais left a number of carriages and horses behind him at Strasburg, so precipitate was his departure from the Army. Josephine afterwards claimed compensation for this loss. See the text.

Note 35. But this law, by tempting farmers to hoard their grain, failed of its purpose.

Note 36. For a careful account of Fouché's career, see Madelin's great work and *Fouché, the Man Napoleon Feared,* by Nils Forssell (Unwin, 1928). Fouché's memoirs are probably spurious, but contain information of a kind which gives them a certain value as apologies for his career.

Note 37. Napoleon was promoted Captain Commandant in 1793.

Note 38. The Buonaparte family led the French party in Corsica, and thus became the bitter enemies of their former friend Pascal Paoli, who, while pretending to be friendly to France, was in secret communication with England. Paoli triumphed, and the Buonaparte house in Ajaccio was sacked. The widow Buonaparte fled to the hills with her younger children. She was rescued by her sons Napoleone and Giuseppe, and the family, stripped of all its possessions, fled to France. Madame Buonaparte received assistance from the Government of Robespierre because she had suffered in the cause of the French Revolution. She remained living frugally and quietly at Marseilles until Napoleone triumphed in Italy.

Note 39. Jeanne de Fontenoy, daughter of the banker Cabarrus, was married while very young to the Marquis de Fontenoy, but did not care for him. She was a Royalist in sympathy, but was chiefly concerned to amuse herself, and soon became notorious as a pretty woman of doubtful morality. She was among the prisoners whom Tallien was sent to Bordeaux to punish. Her beauty attracted him

—perhaps her wealth also—and he spared her life and sent her to Paris, where she became his mistress. Robespierre, hearing of this, had her arrested, and Tallien fell under suspicion. That Jeanne ever really cared for Tallien is doubtful.

Note 40. Hortense does not mention this step, but speaks of the kindness shown to her and her brother by the Princess of Hohenzollern.

Note 41. Robespierre retired from February 13 to March 13, 1794. He reappeared in the Convention of March 15. On the 19th Hébert and his friends were arrested, and on the 24th they were guillotined. Danton was arrested on March 30 with his friends, and they were guillotined on April 5.

Note 42. A warrant issued by the Committee of General Security, dated April 19, 1794, ordered the arrest of the "citoyenne Beauharnais, wife of the former General, Rue St. Dominique, No. 953; a woman called Hosten, same house; and a man called Croiseuil, their confederates, living at Croissy, near Chaton. They are to be taken to prison after their papers have been examined." (*Archives Nationales Régistres des mandats d'arret due Comité de Sureté Générale*. A.F. 11, 294, folio 227.) See note, vol. i., p. 264, of the *Memoirs* of Queen Hortense.

Note 43. Alexander de Beauharnais was executed because of his supposed connection with the so-called "Conspiracy of the Prisons." This conspiracy, like that which was offered as the excuse for the September massacres, existed largely in the imaginations of Robespierre and his friends.

Note 44. *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 34.

Note 45. Hortense gives the banker's name as Henry, but this is a mistake.

Note 46. Hortense also took part in it and gives an interesting description (*Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 38).

Note 47. For full details of this period, see Thiers' monumental *History of the French Revolution* and *Robespierre,* by H. Belloc. Thiers is a much safer guide than Carlyle, who is unfair, but it must be remembered that Thiers wrote during the reign of Louis Philippe. See also the admirable *Memoirs of Chancellor Pasquier.*

Note 48. Robespierre's arrest was ordered by the Convention, but

no prison would receive him, and he was therefore set at liberty. His hope lay in arousing the Commune of Paris. He repaired to the Hôtel de Ville with his friends St. Just and Couthon, but heavy rain damped the ardour of his supporters in the square and they went home. He himself hesitated to rely on the mob (as Napoleon was to hesitate twenty-one years later, after Waterloo). Barras and others broke in on Robespierre in the early hours and a pistol was fired, some say by Robespierre (in order to commit suicide), others by one of Barras' men named Meda. This last is Belloc's view. In any case, Robespierre's jaw was broken. He was condemned without trial as an outlaw and executed the same evening.

The standard work on Robespierre's career is Ernest Hamel, *Histoire de Robespierre d'apres des papiers de famille, les sources originales—des documents entièrement inédits* (3 vols., 1865-67). See also Hamel's *La Maison de Robespierre* (1895); H. Belloc, *Robespierre* (1901); C. F. Warwick, *Robespierre and the French Revolution* (1909).

Note 49. Hortense tells (*Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 43) how Madame de Fontenoy called on her and her brother before Josephine's release. "She petted us, reassured us by comforting words and, above all, by her promise that she would interest herself in our mother, who, in truth, came home a few days later. Tallien had brought about her release." Hortense added rather pathetically: "He (Tallien) showed great presence of mind, and when, later, he asked mother as a favour to receive the lady he had just married (*i.e.,* Madame de Fontenoy), who was attracting too much attention, could she refuse his request?"

Note 50. Napoleon told Las Cases that the people who brought about Robespierre's fall had no intention of ending the Terror, since they themselves were Terrorists. It was the spirit of France, strongly manifested after Thermidor, which put an end to violence.

Note 51. Ober gives this and subsequent letters, pp. 150, 151.

Note 52. Madame de Rémusat (*Mémoires,* vol. i., p. 141) says that Josephine declared she had received an offer of marriage from Hoche. Montgaillard says Hoche desired to be quit of Josephine, "because she was always pestering him for money." Barras (*Mémoires,* vol. ii., p. 54) says she was Hoche's mistress, but that he "gave her" to his handsome groom, upon whom she had cast eyes.

Barras' memoirs were not written by himself but from memoranda left by him. They are scandalous and obscene and merit no great trust. See also *The Wife of General Bonaparte,* by Joseph Turquan (Lane, 1912). Turquan's work is interesting, but his violent hostility to Josephine and his delight in scandal detract from its value as serious history.

Note 53. *Mémoires de la Révellière,* vol. i., p. 338.

Note 54. *Memoirs of Chancellor Pasquier,* an exceedingly reliable and interesting chronicle.

Note 55. Quoted by Richardson, *Dictionary of Napoleon* (Cassell, 1920).

Note 56. The best life of Napoleon in translation in the English language is Fournier's (Longmans, Green and Co., 1912), which, though highly critical and at times bitterly hostile, is immensely well informed and preserves a detachment which permits of a just estimate. Holland Rose's *Life of Napoleon* expresses the prevailing British opinion, which it has done much to confirm. But its hostility detracts from its value. See also Geer's *Napoleon: An Intimate Biography,* which is interesting without being specially informing. Masson is the French authority on Napoleon's private life. See also Levy's two volumes of apologetics, *The Private Life of Napoleon,* and Geer's *Napoleon and his Family* (2 vols., Unwin). Thiers' *History of the Consulate and Empire* is a mine of information, but is coloured by the fact that it was written in the reign of Louis Philippe. The Cambridge Modern History (vols. viii. and ix.) deserves attention. See also Jung, *Bonaparte et son temps* (5 vols., Paris, 1880-81).

Note 57. The Marquis, Madame Renaudin, and Aunt Rosette.

Note 58. *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 146.

Note 59. Bonaparte was made General after the Siege of Toulon.

Note 60. Many writers, Holland Rose among them, have said that this story rests on a slender foundation. But Napoleon himself repeated it to Las Cases at St. Helena (*Memorial of St. Helena,* vol. i., part 2, p. 179). "N—— dictated as follows: 'It was during his command of Paris that Napoleon became acquainted with Madame de Beauharnais. After the general disarming of the Sections had been effected, a youth of ten or twelve years of age presented himself before the staff, entreating the General-in-Chief

to give orders for restoring to him the sword of his father, who had been a General of the Republic. This youth was Eugène Beauharnais, afterwards Viceroy of Italy. Napoleon, moved by the nature of the request and by his juvenile grace, granted his petition. Eugène burst into tears on beholding his father's sword. The General was touched by his sensibility, and behaved so kindly to him that Madame de Beauharnais thought it incumbent on her to wait on him the next day to thank him for his attention. Napoleon returned her visit without delay. Everyone knows the extraordinary grace of the Empress Josephine, her sweet and attractive manners. The acquaintance soon became intimate and tender, and it was not long before they married.'" This account, confirmed by Eugène in his memoirs (vol. i., p. 32), is also described by Hortense (vol. i., p. 44). The chief evidence adduced against it is a letter from Josephine to Bonaparte, quoted by De Coston (*Premières Années de Napoléon,* vol. i., p. 433) and by Turquan (*The Wife of General Bonaparte,* p. 21). But this letter is spurious. It is dated "This 6th Brumaire" (*i.e.,* October 27, 1795). It invites Bonaparte to come to breakfast on October 28. In fact, Josephine's letter to her mother from Hamburg, which is genuine, is dated October 30. She was not, therefore, in Paris on October 27. Barras denies the story, but his denial can be set aside. The story, as given by Napoleon, rings true because this is exactly how one would have expected Josephine to set about getting to know a man whom she wished to attract.

Note 61. *Memoirs,* vol. i., pp. 43, 44.

Note 62. The author, as stated in the preface, has used H. F. Hall's admirable translations, very occasionally changing a word here and there if it has seemed to him that the meaning might thereby be more clearly expressed. Hall's work, *Napoleon's Letters to Josephine,* is among the most careful and honest of recent contributions to Napoleonic literature.

Note 63. Hall thinks this letter was written early in March, 1795. Turquan suggests that it shows that Napoleon and Josephine had lived together before it was written. There is no confirmation of this, and Ségur gives it a positive denial (*Histoire et Mémoires,* vol. i., p. 178). Geer says she was Barras' mistress until the middle of February. (See note below.)

Note 64. There is a letter in which she is made to say that there were moments when she found herself believing that Bonaparte would accomplish great things; but the document comes from Madame Ducrest, and is spurious.

Note 65. Hortense, evidently in good faith, repeats these incorrect statements, but they are corrected in a note to the first volume of her memoirs.

Note 66. Geer, who gives these details (*Napoleon and his Family,* vol. i., p. 48), commits himself to the statement that Josephine continued her liaison with Barras even after her banns had been published at the Mayor's office on February 9, 1796. He quotes a letter written by Josephine from Barras' house at Chailloton on February 13, in support of this view. This charge has not seemed to the present writer to be sufficiently authenticated.

Note 67. Arnault, *Souvenirs d'un sexagénaire,* vol. iii., p. 31.

Note 68. Hortense makes this quite clear in her memoirs, and it is confirmed in many other records.

Note 69. This letter has been lost. From this time onwards in his letters to his wife Bonaparte used the French and not the Italian spelling of his name—*i.e.,* Bonaparte, not Buonaparte.

Note 70. He so referred to her occasionally at St. Helena.

Note 71. See Jung, *Lucien et ses Mémoires,* vol. ii., p. 363. These memoirs are open to suspicion in various ways, but not in respect of such statements as this.

Note 72. Madame d'Abrantès (*Mémoires,* vol. ii., p. 51) describes Josephine's appearance at a ball with Madame Recamier and Madame Tallien—both very lovely women, and Arnault says that these three looked like "the three spring months, April, May, and June, met together in order to celebrate the victory."

Note 73. He had broken the glass of her portrait. Marmont says that he turned pale, and cried: "My wife is either ill or unfaithful."

Note 74. Discovered in 1925 in the Castle of Sagan in Silicia, this letter was given by Hortense to the Duchess of Dino in 1814, after her mother's death.

Note 75. The nature of this scene can only be conjectured.

Note 76. They had been married only four months. This must refer to the period of their engagement. But it is probably hyperbolic.

Note 77. Compare these dates with the dates in the letter from Bologna of June 20—*i.e.*, June 5 and June 11. Josephine was apparently promising to come, but always at some future day.

Note 78. Arnault, *Souvenirs d'un sexagénaire,* vol. ii., p. 293.

Note 79. Bonaparte's father was aide-de-camp to Pascal Paoli, the Corsican leader against the French. Madame Buonaparte remained behind the lines at the battle of Ponte Nuovo while *enceinte* with Napoleon.

Note 80. The Duchesse d'Abrantès says (*Mémoires,* vol. iii., p. 205): "He (Hippolyte Charles) always breakfasted at the Serbollini palace whenever Napoleon was absent visiting some neighbouring town. This fact was known to everybody in Milan as well as to the whole army." Turquan quotes Sismondi (*Revue Historique,* vol. ix., p. 363) as saying that "during his first campaign in Italy he (Bonaparte) had to dismiss several of Josephine's lovers from his staff." Murat has been accused of being one of these, and Geer accepts this story (*Napoleon and his Family,* vol. i., p. 90) which is based on Madame d'Abrantès memoirs (vol. ii., p. 238). Like the story of Josephine's relations with Hoche, it is insufficiently authenticated to be acceptable.

Note 81. In the *Memoirs of Count Lavalette,* p. 111 of the English translation (Gibbings, 1894), this incident is described. He was present. Lavalette, whose marriage to Emelie de Beauharnais made him one of the family, always stoutly supports Josephine, and never mentions anything derogatory to her. His memoirs are those of a man of fine nature, and when they distort truth it is always with a decent object in view.

Note 82. The Comtesse d'Antraigues. This lady had been a professional singer before she became mistress and then wife of the Count. Madame d'Abrantès, in her *Histoire des Salons de Paris,* says that Bonaparte liked her and that she inspired the only verses he ever wrote. He had imprisoned her husband as a Royalist spy—which he was—and Madame had come to beg for a release. She behaved as violently as Bonaparte, flinging her little son at the General's feet with the taunt: "Is he not old enough to be butchered?"

Note 83. Lavalette gives a careful and convincing account of this affair. He was sent by Bonaparte to Paris with this order: "Mix

with everybody; do not let yourself be led away by party spirit; tell me the truth and tell it me free from all passion" (*Memoirs,* English translation, pp. 128 *et seq.*). Lavalette corresponded with Bonaparte in cypher, to the great anger of Barras, who tried to read the letters. Josephine's relations with Barras during this period have never been satisfactorily cleared up, but that she was in touch with him is scarcely open to doubt.

Note 84. Miot de Mélito says that he and Berthier "felt rather embarrassed."

Note 85. Quoted by Baron Larrey, *Madame mère,* vol. i., p. 258.

Note 86. Arnault describes this incident in *Souvenirs d'un sexagénaire,* vol. iii., p. 34.

Note 87. Napoleon at St. Helena played Blindman's Buff on one occasion with the Misses Balcombe.

Note 88. Napoleon constantly invited Josephine to "talk of Versailles"—perhaps to quell the exuberance of his sisters.

Note 89. Quoted by Turquan, English translation, p. 126.

Note 90. She had paid only a small instalment of her rent at the time of her marriage to Bonaparte, and was then heavily in debt, as her transactions with her mother show.

Note 91. Yet they had done very well. Giuseppe had just been appointed French Ambassador at Rome; Luciani, a commissary of the first class; Luigi, a Captain of cavalry; while the two elder girls, Elisa and Paoline, had been well dowered on their marriages.

Note 92. For details of the fate of Fortuné, see Turquan, p. 131, and Arnault, vol. ii., p. 34.

Note 93. This was the 17th Fructidor. For details, see Lavalette's *Memoirs,* Thiers' *History of the Revolution,* and Barras' *Mémoires,* etc.

Note 94. This china was a gift of the Empress Catherine of Russia.

Note 95. On his return from Italy Bonaparte adopted the dress of the Institute and consorted with savants, saying that the youngest drummer boy would not misunderstand.

Note 96. Stanislas Girardin gives these details of this ball (*Journal et Souvenirs,* vol. i., p. 142). He states that "Madame Bonaparte has lost her good looks; she is nearly forty years of age, and she looks it."

Note 97. A note to the first volume of Hortense's *Memoirs* states that Josephine looked very bad tempered.

Note 98. This incident is well attested. J. C. Bailleul, in his *Études sur Napoléon,* vol. ii., p. 55, states that Madame de Stael offered herself to Napoleon; and Count Lavalette, in his more discreet and chivalrous way, says the same thing (*Memoirs,* translation, p. 136). Hortense (*Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 49) gives rather a bitter account.

Note 99. Quoted by Geer (*Napoleon and his Family,* vol. i., p. 67) from Masson.

Note 100. Lavalette gives an amusing account of this affair (*Memoirs,* translation, p. 364).

Note 101. Madame d'Abrantès says of Charles: "He reigned as master there" (*Mémoires,* vol. iii., p. 210). See also about this episode and Josephine's relations with Barras at this time *Souvenirs et Correspondence de Madame Recamier,* vol. i., p. 22; Jung, *Lucien Bonaparte,* vol. ii., p. 211; and Turquan, *The Life of General Bonaparte,* p. 157. Arthur Lévy, in his *Napoléon intime,* deals with the matter also.

Note 102. Bourrienne, *Mémoires,* vol. ii., p. 211. His memoirs are often spiteful and not always trustworthy, but confirmation can very often be obtained elsewhere, as in this case.

Note 103. Giuseppe, when he published this letter, omitted the words "for the veil is entirely rent." They were supplied later by Lewis Goldsmith. Arthur Lévy, however, accepts them.

Note 104. This incident is described in the *Mémoires de la Duchesse d'Abrantès,* vol. iv., p. 504. Madame d'Abrantès is revealed as a scandal-loving woman of coarse mind. But her memoirs cannot be dispensed with in any intimate study of the period.

Note 105. Madame de Rémusat (*Mémoires,* vol. i., p. 147) says that Josephine tried to marry Hortense to Gohir's son at this critical period. Turquan quotes the story, but it lacks solid confirmation. Gohir in his *Mémoires,* vol. i., p. 198, describes the reception by Josephine of the news of Bonaparte's landing at Fréjus. In a note to Hortense's *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 267, it is stated that Josephine received a note from Eugène, and this is elsewhere confirmed. See also Arthur Lévy, *Napoléon intime,* p. 144, and the *Mémoires de la Duchesse d'Abrantès,* vol. iii., p. 97. Hortense (*Memoirs,* vol. i.,

p. 52) gives a brief and scrappy account of her journey with her mother, but adds: "When we stopped to change horses the people would gather round our carriage to ask us whether it was really true that the *saviour* (for that is the name that all France had given him) had returned."

Note 106. Hortense says Josephine received this news at Chalons-sur-Saone, but the editor of her *Memoirs,* vol. i., note on p. 267, corrects her. He says: "Josephine did not know—till she reached Lyons." See also Prince Eugène, *Mémoires,* vol. i., p. 75. Masson says it was Lyons.

Note 107. Lavalette (*Memoirs,* translation, p. 199) gives an account of this journey in which he took part and also of the events in Paris leading up to and including Brumaire. See also Fournier's *Life of Napoleon,* vol. i.

Note 108. Bourrienne is the authority for this episode (*Mémoires,* vol. iv., p. 146).

Note 109. Some little doubt exists about the interval between Bonaparte's and Josephine's arrivals in Paris. Eugène says the interval was twenty-four hours, but Masson and others say it was three days. The point is not material.

Note 110. The authorities here are Bourrienne and Madame d'Abrantès—neither so good as might be wished. Geer, without giving chapter and verse, says she knocked "for a whole night" behind the closed door. He seems to be quoting Turquan, who is quoting Bourrienne and Madame d'Abrantès.

Note 111. Madame d'Abrantès says the idea was suggested by a maidservant. Hortense, it is to be noted, makes no reference to the incident, an omission to which her own editor calls attention.

Note 112. The extract which follows (Bourrienne, *Mémoires,* vol. iv., p. 119) shows that Giuseppe was with Bonaparte, and that Josephine had been ordered to quit the house. It shows, further, that Josephine confessed everything. She was leaving with her children when the final reconciliation took place. The details are nevertheless a little confused, and the present writer expended much trouble before arriving at the account he has given.

Note 113. This is quoted from Madame d'Abrantès, *Mémoires,* vol. iii., p. 210.

Note 114. After the fall of Robespierre Bonaparte was imprisoned

at Antibes as a suspected person, but when it became clear that the Terror was at an end he was released. Thus he went to prison just when Josephine emerged from it—and for the same reason.

Note 115. This was spoken of as the "dry guillotine."

Note 116. On the morning of November 9 Fouché, as Chief of Police, closed the gates of Paris. Bonaparte expostulated. "We go with the nation and by its strength alone. Let no citizen be disturbed, and let the triumph of public opinion in no way resemble the doings of other days in which gangs and groups seized on power." Siéyès, later in the night, advised the arrest of forty Jacobins. "I swore in the morning," said Bonaparte, "to protect the national representation; I will not this evening violate my oath."

Note 117. Her note asking him to breakfast on the 9th is in existence.

Note 118. Bonaparte had carefully sounded the troops. His friend Murat, destined in the near future to marry his sister Carlotta, and at that moment, as Hortense points out (*Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 53), in love with her, was in command of the troops at St. Cloud. Enemies were present, however—Augereau and Bernadotte—and so Bonaparte gave orders that if there was any attempt to tamper with the troops the person attempting to do so would be shot. Lavalette suggests (*Memoirs,* translation, p. 206) that there was real danger, because a Republican General of some reputation—*e.g.,* Bernadotte or Augereau—might have placed himself at the head of the troops. But this had been provided against. Napoleon told Las Cases (*Memorial of St. Helena,* vol. iv., part 7, p. 247) that his trouble had been that he had to enter the Orangery at the side, and so "I was compelled to present my flank to them."

Note 119. Hortense (*Memoirs,* vol. ii., p. 120) denies the story that she told Bonaparte the sword of the High Constable of France would suit him better than his Consular sword. She ought to know. (See also vol. i. of her *Memoirs,* p. 57.)

Note 120. Bourrienne, *Mémoires,* vol. iv., p. 76.

Note 121. The authorities here are Miot de Mélito, *Mémoires,* vol. i., p. 265, and Th. Jung, *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires,* vol. ii. Turquan tells the story in detail (*Wife of General Bonaparte,* p. 203), and adds that Josephine was in Fouché's pay. This cannot be authenticated.

Note 122. Hortense gives a careful account of this distress (vol. i., p. 56). She also discusses her mother's visitors.

Note 123. It has been denied that Luciani played an important part in what was called "The Conspiracy of Marengo." Geer takes this view (*Napoleon and his Family,* vol. i., p. 98). Madame d'Abrantès is positive, however, that Josephine accused Luciani (*Mémoires,* vol. iii., p. 25), and her testimony seems to merit belief. She regards Luciani as the victim of Josephine's slander. Josephine, however, had some solid ground for her assertions. See Turquan (*The Wife of General Bonaparte,* p. 222) and also Stanislas Girardin (*Journal et Souvenirs,* vol. i., p. 197); *Mémoires de Miot de Mélito,* vol. i., p. 301; *Mémoires de Constant,* vol. i., p. 472. Meneval says the whole trouble was due to Luciani's pamphlet (*Mémoires de Meneval,* vol. iii., p. 107).

Note 124. Stanislas Girardin, who was present, describes this incident (vol. i., p. 103).

Note 125. M. de Mun (Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 55).

Note 126. Luciani says that Josephine let him understand that he would be acceptable as a son-in-law (Jung, *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires,* p. 268). Hortense—who, Luciani says, was present at this interview with Josephine—on the other hand, declares that Luciani asked for her hand and was indignantly refused by Napoleon (*Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 74). Luciani was at that time deeply involved with Madame Jouberthon, whom he married after she had borne him a son; he preferred ruin to abandoning his wife. It is not therefore probable that he ever asked for Hortense. Geer (*Napoleon and his Family,* vol. i., p. 105) says he was in Spain when Hortense's engagement to Luigi was announced; but this cannot be true, since his child by Madame Jouberthon was born on May 24, 1803, and she had not gone to Spain with him. In spite of Masson's view (one dissents from this authority with great misgiving), that Josephine always favoured Luigi, it seems to the writer that Turquan's view, founded on Luciani's statement, must be accepted. He has therefore adopted it.

Note 127. Luciani's slander is vouched for by Jung (*Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires,* vol. ii., p. 269). It was Luciani who sowed the seeds of suspicion in Luigi's mind. See Turquan, Masson, etc.

Note 128. The authority here is Bourrienne (*Mémoires,* vol. iv., pp. 319-321). Hortense gives an account of Bourrienne's connection with the affair (*Memoirs,* vol. i., pp. 72 *et seq.*).

Note 129. Masson says that Mama Letizia saw in the marriage the "triumph of a strange family over her own" (*Napoléon et sa Famille,* vol. i., p. 417).

Note 130. It has been denied that Luigi was forced into this marriage. Hortense says he was in love with her—and probably he was—but she reveals the truth when she describes his behaviour on her wedding day (see text). The truth is that Luigi loved his wife, and at the beginning knew her to be innocent; but he was bitterly ashamed by reason of the general belief in Luciani's slander (see Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., pp. 76 *et seq.*). Luigi's account of the affair must be read in the light of these revelations.

Note 131. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 74.

Note 132. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 84.

Note 133. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 181.

Note 134. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., pp. 117 *et seq.* Napoleon said to her: "Your mother's jealousies make me look ridiculous to everyone. . . ." Hortense says of Josephine: "I was the daily witness of painful scenes, for my mother's reproaches wearied Napoleon. He lost his temper. She wept to the ladies, who consoled her and told everybody the reason for her tears. The Emperor was represented as a dangerous, immoral man, and when these reports came back to him his anger burst forth anew."

Note 135. This incident is related by Madame de Rémusat, who was present (*Mémoires,* vol. i., p. 237). Luciani also refers to it (Jung, *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires,* vol. ii., p. 492). Both writers are concerned to show how arrogant and brutal Napoleon was; but the incident wears a different aspect when it is realized that it occurred in the course of an embittered family quarrel. As Luciani says: "The First Consul seemed to take a pleasure in causing these scenes in order to prove his wife's supremacy."

Note 136. Hortense discloses this information (*Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 85).

Note 137. Jung, *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires,* vol. ii., p. 131. But the use which Josephine made of the remark is

revealed by Bourrienne (*Mémoires,* vol. v., p. 22) and Hortense (*Memoirs,* vol. i., pp. 86 *et seq.*).

Note 138. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., pp. 86 *et seq.*

Note 139. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 88.

Note 140. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., pp. 90 *et seq.*

Note 141. Madame de Rémusat was consulted, in jocular fashion, by Bonaparte about this move and made a tactful reply (*Mémoires,* vol. i., p. 213).

Note 142. Madame d'Abrantès recounts this episode (*Mémoires,* vol. ii., p. 82).

Note 143. Turquan (*The Wife of General Bonaparte*) gives these details. Accounts of Josephine's extravagance are given by almost all the memoir writers. Napoleon told Las Cases at St. Helena that on one occasion, when he was driving with the Empress, his carriage was actually stopped by a creditor (*Memorial of St. Helena,* vol. iv, part 7, p. 28). "The man's demand was just," remarked Napoleon, "and yet I was not to blame; I had paid the money at the proper time. The intermediate agent—*i.e.,* Josephine—was solely in fault." In an Appendix to Lavalette's *Memoirs* there is an account of Josephine's personal income. She had as Empress an annual income of 480,000 francs (nearly £20,000), payable monthly. Of this sum, £12,000 were for toilet and personal expenses and £8,000 for pensions and charity.

She received more than this, however, for her benefactories were many and impoverished her. Thus in seven years she obtained an additional 2,000,000 francs to pay off her debts. The report in Lavalette's book states: "She laid nothing by. It is, besides, a known fact that the taste of Her Majesty led her to display still more liberality, more generosity, than her means permitted" (Lavalette, *Memoirs,* p. 439). She had very large numbers of pensioners, many of them unworthy people.

Las Cases (*Memorial of St. Helena,* vol. iv., part 7, p. 120) gives the following information: "The Emperor calculated the amount of the sums which the Empress Josephine must have received from him, and added that with a little order and regularity she might probably have left behind her 50,000,000 or 60,000,000 francs (£2,000,000). 'Her extravagance,' said the Emperor, 'vexed me beyond measure. Calculator as I am, I would, of course, rather

have given away a million of francs than have seen 100,000 squandered away.' He informed us that, having one day unexpectedly broken in upon Josephine's morning circle, he found a celebrated milliner whom he had expressly forbidden to go near the Empress, as she was ruining her by her extravagant demands. 'My unlooked-for entrance occasioned great dismay in the academic sitting. . . .' This lady was arrested and imprisoned, but in a suite with a drawing-room. 'There was a daily file of carriages at the gate of the prison.'"

Note 144. This son was born May 24, 1803. On May 25, 1803, the child was baptized and Luciani was secretly married by a priest to its mother. Masson gives the certificate in full in *Napoléon et sa Famille,* vol. ii., p. 271. A civil marriage took place later when the death of M. Jouberthon was proved—*i.e.,* on October 26, 1803, at Chaumont (see Geer, *Napoleon and his Family,* vol. i., pp. 139, 141). Luciani recognized his son as "legitimate." Napoleon knew nothing of the religious marriage, and was only concerned to stop the civil marriage.

Note 145. Jung, *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires,* vol. ii., p. 176.

Note 146. Madame de Rémusat, *Mémoires.* Mama Letizia retired to Rome in great anger because of Napoleon's attitude to Luciani (see text).

Note 147. Napoleon told Las Cases that he scarcely knew who d'Enghien was at this time (Las Cases, *Memorial of St. Helena,* vol. iv., part 7, p. 273). "'I should tell you,' observed the Emperor, 'that I did not even know precisely who the Duc d'Enghien was, the Revolution having taken place when I was yet a very young man and I having never been at Court.'" It was enough that Enghien was of royal blood.

Note 148. The Emperor Alexander of Russia spoke of "murder," and so did all the European Sovereigns. Madame de Rémusat in her *Mémoires* gives a vivid account of Josephine's behaviour at the time.

Note 149. For details of this marriage, see Geer, *Napoleon and his Family,* vol. i., p. 134. Geer is quoting Masson. He says: "None of the biographers of the Bonaparte family except M. Masson seems to have been aware of this secret marriage, and we owe the information to his careful researches" (Masson, *Napoléon et sa*

*Famille,* vol. ii., pp. 257-258). The secret marriage took place in August, the official marriage in November. Napoleon, who had learned the truth, absented himself from the latter ceremony. (Masson, *Napoléon et sa Famille,* vol. ii., p. 401; Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 101).

Note 150. Masson gives an account of the anger of Giuseppe against Napoleon (*Napoléon et sa Famille,* vol. ii., p. 344) at this time.

Note 151. Geer states (*Napoleon and his Family,* vol. i., p. 181) that Giuseppe told Napoleon that her (Josephine's) coronation was contrary to his interests; that it would tend to give to the children of Luigi titles of preference over his own; that it would prejudice the rights of his children; and that it made the children of Luigi grandsons of an empress, while his own would be grandchildren of a bourgeoise. See also Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 101.

Note 152. Roederer (*Œuvres,* vol. iii., pp. 514 *et seq.*) reports Napoleon as saying: "The daughters of Joseph do not yet know that I am called Emperor; they call me Consul."

Note 153. See Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 115. Napoleon's mother was not present at his coronation.

Note 154. The Imperial Family Council was an official body.

Note 155. Madame de Rémusat, *Mémoires,* vol. ii., p. 62. Masson (*Joséphine Répudiée,* p. 25) discusses the question whether the information was given under the seal of the confessional. There are several accounts of the subsequent marriage.

Note 156. It has been denied that this omission in any way invalidated the marriage.

Note 157. See Geer, *Napoleon and his Family,* vol. i., p. 197, and Hortense's statement (*Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 115) that she and Giuseppe's wife were the only ones to perform the service willingly.

Note 158. Born October 11, 1804, in Paris; died March 17, 1831. He married his first cousin, Charlotte-Napoleon, daughter of Giuseppe.

Note 159. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 116.

Note 160. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 121.

Note 161. He thus announces the capitulation of Mack at Ulm.

Note 162. The revolutionary month Brumaire, which ended on November 21.

Note 163. Eugène was twenty-four, Augusta seventeen. This

marriage became a real love match, and after Napoleon's fall Augusta refused to leave her husband. They had six children: (1) Eugène, who married the Queen of Portugal, but died six weeks later; (2) Max, who married a daughter of the Emperor of Russia; (3) Joséphine, who married Bernadotte's son and became Queen of Sweden; (4) Eugénie, who married a Hohenzollern Prince; (5) Amélie, who married Dom Pedro, first Emperor of Brazil; (6) and the youngest daughter, who married the Count of Wurtemberg.

Note 164. Stephanie de Beauharnais was a daughter of Count Claud de Beauharnais, who was Alexander de Beauharnais's first cousin. Her father abandoned her when he emigrated during the Revolution, and she owed her life to the charity of friends. Josephine neglected her, but Napoleon constituted himself her father and sent her to Madame Campan's. At her marriage she was sixteen. Charles of Baden was twenty-three, and looked "like a Dutch doll" (Geer, *Napoleon and his Family,* vol. i., p. 222). The marriage was unhappy at first, but became very happy. Charles died, aged thirty-five. Stephanie died in 1860, aged seventy-one. They had two sons, who died in infancy, and three daughters: (1) Louise, who became the mother of the future Queen of Saxony; (2) Joséphine, who was the mother of the first King of Roumania; (3) Marie, who married the Duke of Hamilton, her mother having refused her to Louis Napoleon, Hortense's third son and afterwards Napoleon III. Josephine's relations, in short, made good marriages.

Note 165. See Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., pp. 122 *et seq.*

Note 166. The full name of this girl was Louise-Catherine-Eléonore-Denuelle de la Plaigne. She was born September 13, 1787, and was thus eighteen when Napoleon met her. She was married three times: (1) To Revel, the forger, in 1805; divorced April, 1806. (2) To Lieut. Augler in 1808, who died in Poland in 1812 with the rank of Captain. (3) To de Luxberg, Major in the service of the King of Bavaria in 1814. She died in Paris in 1868 during the Second Empire. Napoleon was most generous to her son.

Note 167. This impudent woman afterwards published spurious memoirs of Josephine to please Louis XVIII.

Note 168. Masson says that even after Jena she continued her evil forebodings "on the sly."

Note 169. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 148.

Note 170. Masson thinks that the birth of Eléonore's son convinced Napoleon of his powers of paternity, but in view of Hortense's memoirs this must be questioned (see text).

Note 171. Marie Walewski was the wife of a Polish nobleman, who was already an old man at the time of their marriage. She had borne him a son when she met Napoleon. She fell deeply in love with Napoleon, but would have resisted him had she not been persuaded that for the sake of Poland she ought to yield. This was the passion of Napoleon's maturity, and he is credited with having desired, when Marie Walewski bore him a son, to marry her (see Masson, *Napoléon et les Femmes*).

Note 172. Junot, Duc d'Abrantès (husband of Madame d'Abrantès, who recounts his infidelities with gusto).

Note 173. For details of this melancholy event, see Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., pp. 162 *et seq.*

Note 174. As Geer points out (*Napoleon and his Family,* vol. i.), Napoleon's letters to the bereaved woman seem cold. But his letters to others show how deeply he was moved. He knew the hysterical natures of his wife and her daughter, and felt evidently that a corrective was necessary.

Note 175. Madame de Rémusat, *Mémoires,* vol. iii., p. 170.

Note 176. Geer says he did speak to her, but this seems to be incorrect. Hortense supplies the true version, saying that Napoleon discussed the divorce *after* he heard of Fouché's proposals (*Memoirs,* vol. i., pp. 182, 183).

Note 177. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 123.

Note 178. Up till this time Fouché had been Josephine's strongest supporter. Their acquaintanceship dated back to the period before the Terror.

Note 179. After Fouché's visit the Paris press began to demand a Russian marriage (Nils Forssell, *Fouché,* p. 192).

Note 180. See Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., pp. 182, 183.

Note 181. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 183.

Note 182. Talleyrand was continuously in touch with the Austrians after Tilsit. Fouché, on the contrary, at that time became pro-Russian because he realized that this was Napoleon's policy. Napoleon got rid of Talleyrand in order that Foreign Office secrets might not be imparted to Metternich.

Note 183. See Geer, *Napoleon and his Family,* vol. i., p. 277.

Note 184. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 184.

Note 185. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 184.

Note 186. Hill (*Letters of Napoleon to Josephine,* p. 253) says: "She (Marie) came to Paris, where she was very kindly treated by Josephine, who, having once seen her, found in her no rival but an enthusiastic patriot 'sacrificed to Plutus,' as Napoleon told Lucien at Mantua a few months later, adding that 'her soul was as beautiful as her face.'" (See also Masson, *Napoléon et les Femmes.*)

Note 187. Napoleon III.

Note 188. The fact that the Pope had just excommunicated Napoleon roused the Spanish priesthood against him, and this fact was decisive in the events which followed.

Note 189. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 196.

Note 190. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 197.

Note 191. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 200.

Note 192. Metternich, *Nachgel Papière,* vol. ii., pp. 255, 264, 317.

Note 193. As Hill points out (*Letters from Napoleon to Josephine,* p. 278), Josephine's remarks to the *Corps Législatif* were a "germ of aggression." The present author's own researches have convinced him that Josephine was one of the people spoken of by Metternich: "And these allies (of Austria in France) are not low, contemptible intriguers. Men worthy to represent this nation request our support." (See also Pasquier, *Mémoires,* vol. i., p. 354.)

Note 194. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 203.

Note 195. Napoleon gave these particulars at St. Helena.

Note 196. Eugène intercepted a letter from Caroline to Murat (Pasquier, *Mémoires,* vol. i., p. 354) and sent it to Napoleon. Lavalette had warned Eugène to be on his guard. Caroline hoped to see her husband replace her brother on the throne under Austrian auspices.

Note 197. Napoleon's army had crossed the Danube when the bridges behind it were destroyed by the Austrians, who made use of a flood to effect their purpose.

Note 198. Hortense (*Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 207) says: "A young Polish Countess whom the Emperor had known in Poland came to Vienna during the armistice. My mother knew that she was hidden

in the Palace of Schoenbrunn, unseen by anyone, and the infidelity of a husband to whom she was still tenderly devoted filled her with despair. The young woman became pregnant, and the Emperor (distrustful though he was) could not doubt that he was the father of her child. From that time the hope of having an heir, should he contract a legal union, was firmly fixed in his mind.

"Incessant rain drove the Empress (Josephine) from Plombières, but she was so sad and lonely at Malmaison that I sent my children to her."

Marie Walewski was not in the Palace of Schoenbrunn but in a house in the grounds.

Note 199. Hortense (*Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 207): "I believe also that Fouché, with his skill for intrigue," etc.

Note 200. "The old maid's house." Hill (*Napoleon's Letters to Josephine,* p. 153) says it was Boispréau, belonging to Madame Julien.

Note 201. Hortense (*Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 208) says: "The Emperor arrived at Fontainebleau, and sent us word to join him there. My mother, instead of being delighted, felt her heart sink." Hortense says he received her "pretty well," but this is not the view of other witnesses. Napoleon had arrived at Fontainebleau early in the morning, before Josephine had left Malmaison. A messenger was sent to her. His words on greeting her were: "And so you are come, Madame. It is time. I was about setting out for St. Cloud." Josephine burst into tears.

Note 202. Meneval in his memoirs asserts that Napoleon's bad temper was feigned. "In any case," comments Hill, "the meeting was a very bad *quart d'heure* for Josephine."

Note 203. Hortense (*Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 208) says: "He did things he had never done before, such as driving out without the Empress accompanied only by the Princess Borghese (Paolina), with whom he spent almost every evening. It was said that a certain Piedmontese lady in the Princess's service was the reason for this strange assiduity." It was also said, Masson thinks by Josephine, that Napoleon was guilty of incest with his sister!

Note 204. Bausset describes this extraordinary scene in his *Mémoires.*

Note 205. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 210.

Note 206. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 211.

Note 207. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 214.

Note 208. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 217.

Note 209. Meneval, who accompanied Napoleon, describes this scene in his memoirs.

Note 210. It is still on show at Malmaison.

Note 211. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. i., p. 218.

Note 212. The "old maid's house."

Note 213. Letter from Metternich in Vienna to Schwarzenberg, Austrian Ambassador in Paris: "*January* 27, 1810.—The most distinct overtures having been made by the Empress Josephine and Queen of Holland to Madame de Metternich, His Imperial Majesty thinks it better to pursue this unofficial but less compromising road," etc.

Note 214. Napoleon gave Louis Tascher £4,000 a year and made him Count Tascher.

Note 215. In other words, Josephine was to pay her debts and repair Navarre out of the £40,000 allowed to her yearly by Napoleon from his privy purse. It was to take her two years to effect these payments, for her debts amounted to £56,000 and the repairs were to cost £24,000. £12,000 plus £12,000 plus £4,000 equals £28,000. Napoleon is inaccurate here.

Note 216. Napoleon III.

Note 217. See Ober, *Joséphine,* p. 377.

Note 218. See Masson (*Joséphine Répudiée*) and St. Amand (*Dernières Années de l'Impératrice Joséphine,* p. 237).

Note 219. He writes on *July* 8 that he has received her letter of *July* 8. The date on his letter ought probably to be July 18, for Eugène reached Aix on July 10, and he had sent for the Grand Duke of Berg on July 10 (Brotonne, p. 625).

Note 220. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. ii., pp. 16, 17.

Note 221. Madame Ducrest's *Memoirs of the Empress Josephine.* See Preface for discussion of these. See also Masson, *Joséphine Répudiée.*

Note 222. Madame Ducrest gives the last sentence of the letter as follows: "This child, conjointly with our Eugène, will secure my happiness and that of France." This is almost certainly an invention on her part. She invented five complete letters.

Note 223. Madame d'Abrantès refers to Josephine's growing stout at this time. So does Madame Ducrest.

Note 224. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. ii., p. 27.

Note 225. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. ii., p. 27.

Note 226. See Hill (*Napoleon's Letters to Josephine,* p. 313) and Masson's *Joséphine Répudiée.*

Note 227. Josephine's granddaughter (Eugène's daughter) married a Bernadotte and became in due course Queen of Sweden.

THE DESCENDANTS OF JOSEPHINE.

Joseph and Alexander de Beauharnais.

| | |
|---|---|
| Eugène, *m.* Augusta of Bavaria. | Hortense, *m.* Louis Bonaparte, King of Holland. |
| (1) Eugène, *m.* Queen of Portugal. | (1) Napoleon-Charles, died. |
| (2) Max, *m.* Romanoff Princess (Russian Royal House). | (2) Napoleon-Louis, died. |
| (3) Joséphine, *m.* Bernadotte and became Queen of Sweden and mother of the present reigning house. | (3) Louis Napoleon, who became Napoleon III. |
| (4) Eugène, *m.* Hohenzollern Princess (Prussian Royal House). | |
| (5) Amélie, *m.* Dom Pedros, Emperor of Brazil. | |
| (6) ? *m.* Count of Wurtemberg. | |

Marie Theodaline

Note 228. Masson, *Joséphine Répudiée.* He adds: "If one traces back to this source the worst calumnies against the morals of the Emperor, it is Josephine that one encounters there."

Note 229. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. ii., p. 47.

Note 230. Fournier, *Napoleon,* vol. ii., p. 213.

Note 231. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. ii., pp. 66, 67 *et seq.*

Note 232. Ober, *Joséphine,* p. 399. Other writers mention this incident.

Note 233. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. ii., pp. 76, 77.

Note 234. Uncle of Queen Victoria, afterwards Leopold I., King of the Belgians. He had played a part in the Austrian conspiracy before the Wagram campaign, and had been received frequently by Josephine and Hortense.

Note 235. Hortense, *Memoirs,* vol. ii., pp. 80 *et seq.* She gives a deeply interesting account of this period.

Note 236. Holland Rose calls this the *mot* of the occasion.

Note 237. Hortense (*Memoirs,* vol. ii., p. 93) tells how Alexander said to her: "The King (Louis XVIII.) showed me his proclamation. It is dated in the nineteenth year of his reign. I advised him to remove this date, but he did not seem inclined to do so."

Note 238. Afterwards King Louis Philippe.

Note 239. Madame de Rémusat gives this detail.

Note 240. Some authorities hold that Josephine was suffering from quinsy—*i.e.,* an abscess of the tonsil. But the manner of her end does not lend support to this view—at least in the writer's opinion, and he has had considerable professional experience of both complaints. There is another fantastic tale—that Josephine was poisoned by agents of Louis XVIII. because, when she was Barras' mistress, she played a part in helping the boy, Louis XVII. (Louis XVI.'s son), to escape from the Temple, and so knew that he was alive and that Louis XVIII. had no right to the throne. This story is based on a long series of pure assumptions and need not be considered.

Note 241. Josephine's tombstone bears her name, with, under it, the names of Eugène and Hortense. Hortense is buried beside her.

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